COMBINING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND
BEST BUSINESS PRACTICES FOR
HIRING “RIGHT FIT” PASTORS

DMin Final Draft
Presented to
Dr. David Fletcher
Dr. Scott Barfoot
Dallas Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
J. William Egner
September 6, 2010
SIGNATURE PAGE

A Placeholder
ABSTRACT

Church expert Gary McIntosh cites the short tenure of today’s American pastor as the number one reason churches fail to achieve their stated visions. Ultimately, the cause of short tenure is a poor “fit” between the pastor and the church. What has not been explored adequately are the biblical issues surrounding fit and the design for a biblically-based hiring process that maximizes it. If the probability of longevity can be increased through a “right fit” hiring process then the probability of vision achievement should rise as well.

To discover the influence of hiring on vision achievement, this ministry research project studied two hypotheses: (1) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who pray and the church actually fulfilling its vision; and (2) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who use best business hiring practices and a church actually fulfilling its vision. These hypotheses were studied qualitatively using the case study method in two churches that have each demonstrated decades-long track records of achieving their stated visions. Such vision-achieving churches have certainly learned how to hire for better fit.

The results of each case showed strong correlation with one another as well as with the biblically-derived and best practice supplemented “right fit” hiring process developed herein. Furthermore, the replication of such strongly aligned results argues that this idealized “right fit” hiring model qualitatively proves both research hypotheses. In addition, this hiring model can be used by any local church to improve the fit of any new candidate thereby increasing his longevity and thus producing greater alignment between the church’s stated vision and its actual realization of it.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction .............................................................................................................8  
Research Problem and Question ........................................................................11  
Assumptions .........................................................................................................12  
Research Hypotheses ..........................................................................................13  
Goals for the Project ............................................................................................14  
Project Description ...............................................................................................14

CHAPTER 2: PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW .............25

Four Resolutions That Anchor A Biblical Right Fit Hiring Process .................26  
Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 1 .........................................52  
Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 2 .........................................71  
Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 3 .........................................91  
Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 4 ........................................104  
Summary: A Biblical Right Fit Hiring Process ......................................................117

CHAPTER 3: PROCEDURE AND RESEARCH METHOD .........................122

Research Method ..................................................................................................124  
Research Design and Vetting Subject Churches ................................................127  
Summary of Chapter 3 ..........................................................................................143

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS .....................................................................................145

Case Study 1: Fellowship Bible Church ..............................................................146  
Case Study 2: Willow Creek Community Church ...............................................166
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1—The Idealized Right Fit Hiring Pattern .................................................................121
Table 2—Comparing Fellowship’s Hiring Process with the Right Fit Pattern .................301
Table 3—Comparing Willow’s Hiring Process with the Right Fit Pattern .......................341
Table 4—Summary of Actual Versus Predicted Results .......................................................343
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1—A Generalized Three-Step Pastoral Hiring Process........................................145
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Every healthy evangelical church wants to glorify God, grow maturing disciples, impact its community as the hands and feet of Christ and extend the Kingdom’s reach beyond its own borders into the world. Further, each of these churches wants to progressively fulfill those biblical mandates through its own particular God-inspired vision.

The Serious Current Problem

Though churches normally desire to fulfill their stated visions for God’s glory, according to church experts, many do not. Gary McIntosh identifies short leadership tenure as the number one problem. In 2000’s *Staff Your Church for Growth*, he writes,

The number one reason many churches fail to fulfill their mission and advance the kingdom of God in their community is the issue of *leadership tenure*. Depending on whom you read, the average staff member stays at a church from thirty to forty-eight months. This has generated a leadership crisis in a majority of churches. If the position you are seeking to fill is vital to the ministry, *longevity* will be one of the keys to implementing this position successfully.¹

Six years later, the North American Mission Board’s research concluded that on average a pastor lasts only five years in a church.² George Barna’s 2009 research has determined that the average American pastor’s longevity in his church is a somewhat longer, between


four and eight years, depending on his denominational affiliation. He writes, “On average, these [mainline Protestant] pastors last four years before moving to another congregation. That is about half the average among Protestant pastors in non-mainline churches.” Yet Bob Kaumeyer, Placement Director at Dallas Theological Seminary now for more than a decade, believes the longevity for non-denominational Protestant pastors is lower, perhaps three to five years for many roles.

As this small sample suggests church experts differ on the exact length of tenure, ranging from less than three to as long as eight years for Protestant non-denominational pastors. Regardless of exact length Rick Warren sounds a warning siren regarding the severity of the current state of affairs in today’s church,

The truth is pastoral longevity is one of the untold secrets of church health. My experience is this—a long pastorate does not guarantee a church will grow, but changing pastors every few years guarantees a church won’t grow.

Can you imagine what the kids would be like in a family where they got a new daddy every two or three years? They would most likely have serious emotional problems. In the same way, the longevity of the leadership is a critical factor for the health and growth of a church family. Long pastorates make deep, trusting, and caring relationships possible. Without those kinds of relationships, a pastor won’t accomplish much of lasting value.

Churches that have a revolving door of short-tenure pastoral hires averaging five to six years, who struggle to hire well or who just settle for “almost” in their hiring process, will likely fall short of realizing their stated visions. Getting the right pastors with the right

---


4 Bob Kaumeyer, “Personal Communication on Hiring,” (Fort Worth: 2009). See Appendix A for the full transcript of this interview, used with permission.

5 An average of three years on the low side and eight years on the high side yields 5.5 years. The median length of tenure appears to be somewhere closer to four years. But in light of Barna’s higher number based on current research, five to six years will be an assumed average pastoral tenure where needed.

gifts and talents in the right roles is critical for churches to realize their God-given visions.

Admittedly, finding a “right fit” pastor, one with the right gifts, talents and compatibility needed for longer-term sustainability in any open role, is hard work. A July 21, 2009 article by Bobby Ross in Christianity Today entitled “The Workers are Few” spells out what is widely felt in church circles,

Need a seminary graduate with ministerial experience who is eager to serve as senior pastor of a church of 1,000 members or more? No problem.
A posting for such a position can draw anywhere from 50 to 200 applicants, said Don Goehner, president of the Goehner Group, a California-based organization for Christian organizations.
But need a senior pastor with the right combination of preaching talent, administrative talent, and people skills to succeed?
Despite a surplus of job seekers posting resumes on websites such as ChurchStaffing.com, finding such a pastor can be extremely difficult, said Goehner, whose firm recently searched for lead pastors for three large evangelical churches.7

Recruiting the right pastor with the right gifts and talents and placing him in the right role is definitely hard work. As Ross’ article goes on to say, the rise of the Christian recruiting firm is a strong testimony to the difficulty most churches are facing when looking for the right executive-level pastoral staff. For many local churches today, finding the right fit pastor for their particular situation can be as frustrating as looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack.8

---
8 Ibid. Note the title of the article "The Workers are Few" suggests the difficulty of finding the right person with the right gifts and talents for the role, thus the allusion to "a needle in a haystack."
The Great Need

Hiring well in the local church is one easily overlooked factor for facilitating a vital, vibrant and effective ministry. Furthermore, McIntosh and Warren have both noted a strong correlation between leadership tenure and vision-realization. Pastors who fit well in their role and with their church should have longer, more productive tenures and longer tenures suggest a greater potential for realizing a church’s Kingdom vision. The lesson seems plain: the church must become more proficient at hiring and must begin to treat it as a crucial and non-negotiable ministry for God and his people’s sake. Hiring well must become a strategic and essential function for any local church who desires to see its God-given vision come to pass. The church must “raise the bar” on itself when it comes to hiring.

Research Problem and Question

McIntosh, Warren, et al. believe that a pastor’s tenure (averaging perhaps five to six years) is the number one issue crippling the vision progress of the local church. Five plus years in a vital ministry position is simply too short a time in which to establish the deep, trust-engendering relationships necessary for congregational stability, discipleship and vision-progress. Barna’s 2009 data also suggests a hidden reality. Most churches do not know what they need to know when it comes to hiring well and for the longer-term. According to his data, the hiring process currently used in the local church

---

* Long-time pastor’s coach and Executive Pastor, Dan Reiland, shares 10 maxims for hiring well in “Never Hire Your Mama” (The Pastor’s Coach, June 2009, Issue 1, p. 1) and notes that “80% of all difficult staffing issues are covered if you hire well. I’ve made my mistakes over the years, and a few were costly. But I’ve learned and developed the art of hiring. No one bats 100% but the following hiring maxims will make your life easier and your staff more enjoyable and productive.” The fact that Reiland offers counsel on hiring strongly suggests many local churches need specific pointers on hiring better. And William Hendricks, President of the Giftedness Center, writes in an article for XPastor on hiring in the church (April 2007) called “Good Fit/Poor Fit—How Can You Tell?” “If I’m a hiring manager—especially in a church, of all places—I want to really make sure that I’m placing people where they can be most effective, because there are eternal ramifications for how I am making use—or not making good use—of people’s [spiritual] gifts.” Both of these authors highlight how important and non-negotiable getting hiring as “right” as possible is for any local church.
today is not repeatedly identifying right fit pastors who ought to enjoy a longer, more impactful tenure. The cumulative data clearly show, in fact, that the reverse is true – the church’s hiring process is broken. Thus, the question to be addressed in this project may be stated in the following way: By what process can any local church repeatedly hire the best right fit pastor it can find and afford for its open role?

Assumptions

As in any study of limited scope and resources assumptions must be made. The first assumption for this project is that hiring the right pastors with the right gifts and talents and placing them in the right roles repeatedly is the very lifeblood of any church that presently senses it is fulfilling its God-inspired vision. In other words, any church that has a decades-long track record of fulfilling its stated vision must have learned to hire well – to repeatedly recruit the right pastors with the right gifts and talents and place them in the right roles. Therefore, this research project will restrict its investigation to hiring pastors who are Elder-qualified, not all church staff, and will be satisfied with drawing qualitative conclusions on hiring from churches that evidence such a track record as examined through the case study method.

10 This is an application to the church of the “First Who…Then What” principle from Jim Collins’ book Good to Great. Regarding organizations that went from good to great (companies that made a transition from good results to great results and sustained those results for at least 15 years) Collins notes, “Those who build great companies understand that the ultimate throttle on growth for any great company is not markets, or technology, or competition, or products. It is one thing above all others: the ability to get and keep enough of the right people.” (p. 54, italics added) He goes on to quote Walter Bruckart regarding the top five factors that led to his company’s transition from good to great, “One would be people. Two would be people. Three would be people. Four would be people. And five would be people. A huge part of our transition can be attributed to our discipline in picking the right people.” (p. 55) Thus it is a logical inference to assume that churches who have sustained at least 15 years of achieving their stated vision have also learned to hire well at the decision-making pastor level.

11 This study will be limited to investigating hiring pastors who are Elder-qualified according to a conservative interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Reflecting such, it is this author’s belief that the Scriptures teach that these roles are limited to men. However, the same principles discussed in this project would certainly apply for hiring highly-qualified women for the significant leadership roles they play in any dynamic local church ministry, such as a Minister to Women or a Minister to Children.
The second assumption is that any principle involved in making repeated right fit pastoral hires is discoverable from the Scriptures. Since it is axiomatic from the New Testament that the Lord wants his church to grow broader and deeper, He has explicitly or implicitly provided guidance in his Word regarding how to go about selecting such leadership. This project will assume, therefore, that the Scriptures will provide the needed skeleton for defining an ideal, biblically-effective hiring process.

The third assumption is that there are some best practices from the marketplace that affirm biblical truth. Therefore, where these best practices align with Scripture it is reasonable to believe that the church has freedom to adapt them into its hiring process.

The final assumption is that the local church’s current hiring process, in fact borrowed years ago from the marketplace, does not need to be thrown out but can be modified and upgraded as needed.

**Research Hypotheses**

This project theorizes that hiring decision-makers in any local church who pray diligently for the right man, who follow biblical principles for role and fit on the pastoral ministry team, and who use best marketplace practices that affirm scriptural truth will repeatedly hire more “right fit” pastors for their churches as evidenced by that church’s track record of fulfilling its stated vision.

Therefore two hypotheses for this research study will be studied qualitatively: (1) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who pray and the church actually fulfilling its vision; and (2) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who use best business hiring practices and a church actually fulfilling its vision.

Limiting this investigation to male, Elder-qualified pastors should be taken only as a pragmatic implication of conducting a manageable project and nothing more.
**Goals for the Project**

The first goal of this project is to surface and articulate what the Scriptures teach regarding biblical principles for differentiating one pastor who fits from one who does not fit in a local church role. This will call for investigating the twin ideas of role and fit within a pastoral team as such can be determined from the Word of God.

The second goal of this project is to discover and articulate what the Scriptures teach regarding a biblical hiring process for identifying such right fit pastors. When these two goals are synthesized, such principles and such a process will coalesce into a biblical framework for defining a God-honoring, biblically-sound hiring process that will more repeatedly identify right fit pastors for any local church.

The third goal of this project is to examine the state of the art marketplace hiring process for its “best practices,” assuming that where they affirm biblical truth the church has the freedom to adapt and implement some of these proven practices and tools that have been shown to deliver the desired outcomes.

The final result of this project might be likened to developing a biblically-based template describing a “how to” strategy for repeatedly hiring right fit pastors in any local church.

**Project Description**

The following paragraphs in this chapter describe what will eventually become the second through the fifth chapters of this project’s final dissertation.

*Previous Research and Literature Review*

The marketplace, probably as a result of downsizing and increased global competition, has written hundreds of titles on hiring in just the past decade. They have come to the conclusion that having the right people in the right places makes the biggest difference to their company’s bottom line. Perhaps as well, with the rise of the multi-staff
mega-church over the past 30 years, interest in the church regarding hiring might also be seen to be moving toward a greater focus on role and fit.

**The Church Literature**

Over the past 20 years authors such as Darius Salter, Rick Warren, Aubrey Malphurs, Harold Westing, Bill Hybels, Gary McIntosh and others have written of the need to view pastoral ministry as a team. In fact, the descriptive and helpful picture of an athletic team has become an analogy for the pastoral team, emphasizing the diversity and the necessity of individual giftedness as well as the need for real community to collaboratively, passionately and humbly sum the parts in order to achieve common goals and church-wide visions. As most of these authors have written in different words, team is God’s vision for the pastoral ministry of the Body of Christ.

Therefore, hiring a right fit pastor must necessarily involve clearly defining both the open role on the team as well as the minimum level of acceptable fit for that role. If the role requires a “hand” then it should not be filled with an “ear” or if the role requires a “mouth” it should not be filled with a “liver.” As well, one candidate divinely designed as a hand may be a better fit than another hand also interviewing for the same role. Defining and evaluating on role and fit becomes the central tenet for repeatedly hiring well.

However, few church authors have offered any substantial criteria that could be used by hiring decision-makers for recognizing one pastor’s fit for a given role over another. Charles Olson’s 1996 dissertation entitled “Building and Leading a Pastoral Team”\(^{12}\) has provided a conceptual start. In it he proposes three fit criteria for identifying potential team players: character (a heart of godliness), competence (an ability to perform...

\(^{12}\) Charles D. Olson, “Building and Leading A Pastoral Team” (Dissertation, Talbot School of Theology, 1996).
successfully) and compatibility with that particular local church. Bill Hybels’ 2009 book *Courageous Leadership* seems to have built on this list and added a sense of calling as a fourth criterion for helping to discover God’s candidate for an open role. Thus these four criteria for defining an open role and for evaluating potential fit – character, calling, competence and compatibility – become the first realistic and helpful grid through which to view any open role as well as the available candidates who desire to fill it.

Interestingly two things are missing from these author’s works and others like them. The first is the minimal examination and context of the biblical principles undergirding hiring in the local church, such as they can be derived from the Scriptures. For instance stating the need, however obvious, for making prayer the centerpiece of a pastoral search process is conspicuously absent. Anecdotal information on hiring pastors abounds, but anchoring that counsel to even a cursory study and reflection of hiring principles from the Bible is the exception.

Second, very little concrete and readily-implementable tools regarding how to evaluate a candidate’s sense of calling, his character, his competence and his sense of fit with the team – his compatibility – is also absent. Olson has provided a conceptual structure through which to think about evaluating candidates and this is a good start. But the means that will yield reliable and repeatable results are missing and are seemingly left to the hiring decision-maker or church committee to be defined. Unfortunately in this author’s experience, especially in the absence of concrete user-friendly tools, many church decision-makers will opt to pass on improving their hiring process being convinced that it is just too hard to realize any kind of theoretical improvement and therefore not worth the effort to make a change.

---


14 For applying similar thinking see also William Hendricks, “Good Fit/Poor Fit—How Can You Tell,” (XPastor, 2007).
The Marketplace Literature

The literature produced by the marketplace in this area over the past ten years dwarfs that produced by the church. Just the briefest survey of titles (e.g. *Stop Hiring Failures!, Zero Defect Hiring, You’re Not the Person I Hired!* and *Three Signs of a Miserable Job*) suggests the marketplace has begun to seriously grapple with doing everything in their power to find and put the right person with the right talents in the right places within their organizations. The marketplace has become keenly aware of the principle of role and fit in its hiring process and has developed concrete practices that deliver the results they desire. Such “best practices,” such practical and usable tools, are one key item missing from the church’s literature.

In fact, most of the marketplace books are virtual “how to” manuals written for hiring managers who must recruit and retain top talent in order to keep their companies competitive. 2001’s *The War for Talent*, 2005’s *Topgrading*, 2006’s *You’re Not the Person I Hired!*, 2007’s *Hire with Your Head* and 2008’s *Who* provide broad research, concrete practices and supportive case studies illustrating the validity of the practices and tools they recommend. Interestingly enough, these authors also view their corporate executive rosters as athletic teams and are looking to invite only those onto their team who will perform at the highest levels in their roles and who also fit with the existing corporate culture. To date, for them perhaps even more so than for the church, getting role and fit right for every hire is a non-negotiable. They have developed and proven best practices and tools that help them repeatedly evaluate and differentiate the fit of one employee for a given role over another.

The Next Steps

A thorough literature review will be required in order to accomplish the goal of this ministry project. First, the review must precede any conclusions on role and fit proposed by the current church or marketplace literature in the sense of first establishing
the principles that can be derived for hiring from the Scriptures. To this author’s knowledge, an appropriate level of biblical research and reflection undergirding the church literature’s current recommendations has yet to be done. What the passages and pictures of the Bible teach about role and fit must be established and articulated in principle form first. Only then will a strong, biblical foundation exist on which the rest of the research may be built. The outcome of this critical first step will be a set of four biblical principles or resolutions that will serve as the over-arching directives or the framework for a biblically-grounded right fit pastoral hiring process.

Second, both the current church and marketplace best practices must be evaluated against the biblical principles established in step one. Where these best practices are in agreement with the Scriptures they might be kept; where they are in disagreement they must be rejected. The majority of the current conclusions and practices regarding hiring in the church are based on the anecdotal insights of seasoned practitioners. While it would not be wise to dismiss these observations out-of-hand, they must be evaluated against the biblically-based principles drawn from the Scriptures themselves. Indeed, where they affirm the truth of the Scriptures and facilitate achieving them the church immediately gains tools for making better hires. In fact, these best practices are what will help this proposed hiring process gain traction within the local church. The outcome of this section of the literature review will be to establish at least one easily implementable best practice that supports each biblical resolution, such that any hiring decision-maker in the local church can use it tomorrow.

The conclusion of the literature review will be to distill a one-page outline of biblically-based principles and best practices that essentially become prescriptions for any local church’s hiring process. Subordinate to each biblical resolution will be at least one best practice adapted from the church or marketplace literature that will help hiring decision-makers in the church know practically and concretely how to better recruit the right pastor with the right gifts and talents for the right role beginning immediately. This
concise “how to” outline will then become the idealized template against which the hiring processes of two large churches may be gauged qualitatively to confirm an association between hiring well and the accomplishment of a church’s vision.

*Procedure and Research Method*

This project will use the biblically-derived hiring outline developed in the Literature Review as the idealized template against which two large churches’ hiring processes may be investigated. This investigation will be conducted using the case study method of research, interviewing key hiring decision-makers within each church using a set of baseline questions to get the conversation started. These questions will be adequate to retrieve qualitative information for confirming the two hypotheses of this study: (1) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who pray and the church actually fulfilling its vision; and (2) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who use best business hiring practices and a church actually fulfilling its vision. These investigations will seek to illustrate qualitatively how hiring well plays a critical role in a local church achieving its stated vision. If possible, other sources will be reviewed and/or interviewed as well in order to better establish the veracity of the claims made by those on the inside.

*The Process*

First, two subject churches will be identified and vetted as appropriate for this study. Second, executive-level hiring decision-makers will be interviewed. Third, two case studies will be prepared, comparing and contrasting each church’s responses to the idealized hiring process, and drawing conclusions as to the association between their hiring process, the quality of their actual hires and the impact their process has had on accomplishing their church’s vision.
The Subject Churches

It seems true enough that any local church that has a decades-long track record of fulfilling its stated vision must have learned to hire well – to repeatedly recruit the right pastors with the right gifts and talents and place them in the right roles. For this ministry project, large, multi-staff mega churches are of particular interest.\textsuperscript{15} Therefore, two churches that fulfill a more objective grid of “success,” namely Jim Collin’s non-profit greatness criteria, will be selected for interviews. Collins explains his three “greatness” criteria for churches as follows,

(1) [There must be] superior performance relative to its mission in the world.
(2) [There must be] a distinctive impact on its community. So you’d say, ‘If this church disappeared, it would leave a serious hole in this community.’
(3) [There must be] endurance. Making an impact over a long enough time, so that it’s not dependent on the personality of one leader. If a church is effective during one pastorate, it may be a church with a stellar pastor, but it is not yet a great church.\textsuperscript{16}

Potential subject churches will be researched, using their own materials as found on the Internet or in print to confirm that they meet at least two of Collin’s three criteria.

Second, executive-level hiring decision-makers of the two subject churches must be accessible to the author. The author will contact his friends and professional network to check for the availability of large churches willing to participate in this research project. These senior staff members will likely have the breadth of knowledge and tenure necessary in order to speak to the long-running patterns and processes of hiring at their respective churches. But they must also be willing and have permission from their Boards to speak candidly. As well, these executive-level individuals are likely the ones who have been hiring candidates for open pastoral positions.

\textsuperscript{15} Author, \textit{Megachurch Definition}(Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2010, accessed September 1, 2010 2010); available from http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/definition.html. "The term megachurch generally refers to any Protestant congregation with a sustained average weekly attendance of 2000 persons or more in its worship services."

Based on his relationships, and a preliminary understanding of each church, the author believes Fellowship Bible Church, Little Rock (Little Rock, AR) and Willow Creek Community Church (South Barrington, IL) will fulfill both criteria and be willing to serve as the subject churches.

The Interviews

Person-to-person interviews with the executive-level hiring decision-makers of each church will be conducted using a set of baseline, conversation-starting questions. These questions seek to flesh out if and how this church has in real life followed the idealized biblical hiring process created at the end of Chapter 2. Depending on scheduling constraints it may take more than one interview to cover the entire process as well as any follow-up questions that may arise. The interviews will be digitally recorded with the interviewee’s permission for later review when writing the case studies.

The Case Studies

The case study will be selected as the research method of choice for this ministry research project. Robert Yin writes of the advantage of the case study method for this kind of situation, “In general, case studies are the preferred method when (a) ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context.”\(^{17}\) All of the above are true for this investigation.

Case studies will be prepared for each church based on the responses given by each hiring decision-maker. These case studies will note both conformity and non-conformity to the idealized hiring process, also noting where and how discrepancies may have had or may yet have an impact. Special attention will be given to understanding how

these churches concretely and pragmatically discover a candidate’s sense of calling, his Christian character, his competence for the role and his sense of fit or compatibility with the existing pastoral team. The questions will almost exclusively focus on “how” and “why” each church has chosen to hire as it currently does. As such, these case studies will provide real-life snapshots of how two large, well-led, multi-staff mega churches hire as well as this author believes they do.

The Feasibility

This study is feasible with respect to the author’s time. The author has been given permission by his Board of Elders to pursue this study for the sake of his own professional development, for the benefit of his local church and potentially for the sake of the church at-large. Toward this end he has been given up to three months of “sabbatical” time in order to pursue the investigation, the research and the writing.

The study is also feasible with respect to interviewing the subject church hiring decision-makers. The author believes that the two subject churches will participate fully and candidly in order that the church at-large may be strengthened and empowered for greater work.

Anticipated Results

Several results are anticipated from this ministry project. The first result is being able to draw out and define generalized biblical principles that can guide the hiring of pastors in any local church. These principles, it is believed, will confirm and affirm the twin concepts of role and fit where a sense of team fit must be determined based on biblical rather than marketplace criteria and may center on the four areas of character, calling, competence and compatibility. It is anticipated that these principles, coming as they do from the Scriptures, will form something akin to imperatives, directives or resolutions that those charged with hiring should thus take seriously as they are retrieved from the Word of God.
Second, it is anticipated that by examining the best practices currently used in the marketplace that at least a few of them will affirm the biblical principles derived above. These practices will then put concrete, usable tools into the hands of those hiring decision-makers in the local church, giving them definitive and proven means for more repeatedly hiring better than they currently do.

Third, it is anticipated that the interviews with the two subject churches will confirm the two hypotheses – that church hiring decision-makers who pray (as well as who intentionally or unintentionally follow other biblical principles) and who use proven best practices from the marketplace make better pastoral hires as evidenced by a prolonged track record of achieving their church’s stated vision.

Finally, it is anticipated that the research itself may be able to be distilled into a brief, user-friendly packet that could be used by hiring decision-makers in any local church to update and upgrade their hiring process for the sake of their congregation and the benefit of the Lord’s Kingdom.

Conclusions and Implications for Further Study

This ministry project anticipates being able to show that hiring well is beyond just an intuitive factor, but is indeed a real factor necessary for helping any local church to achieve its stated vision. And further, that hiring well or at least hiring better is within the reach of any decision-maker who invests just a little more time to upgrade their current hiring process.

This project also anticipates being able to conclude with a small packet of materials that would equip long-time or first-time hiring decision-makers with both real and practical tools as well as the biblical principles that undergird such tools. With such, it may become possible to instruct graduating seminary students for at least an hour in hiring philosophy and practice for the sake of the church. It may also be possible that the
packet becomes the basis for a breakout session at a pastor’s conferences to enhance what any local church is currently doing.

Further research might focus on a longer-term study following several churches of different sizes who implement the hiring process defined in Chapter 2. These churches would then be followed up, investigating the retention of those recruits years down the road compared with other churches who used another process, or had no defined process at all.
CHAPTER 2
PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW

According to George Barna the local church is just not getting it right long-term with respect to repeatedly hiring right fit pastors.18 Clearly the church struggles to make repeated right fit hires, perhaps because it does not understand the hiring process. Intuitively, any hiring process can be defined in terms of three major components. First, there is the objective of the hiring process. This is the end result or the desired fulfillment of the process. Second, there must be sufficient criteria in place for objectively defining the ideal candidate. And third, there must be a process by which each candidate is evaluated consistently, objectively and thoroughly in order to determine his degree of fit with the open role.19

This project proposes that what is most needed in the church today is to root these intuitive and well-known hiring concepts deep into scriptural truth in order to be reminded of God’s objective for the pastoral hiring process, to know and to use biblical criteria to determine a right fit between any pastoral candidate and an open role, and to follow God’s process regarding the manner in which any candidate is evaluated for fit. Only then, by following a biblically-grounded process, will church hiring decision-makers recruit with the conviction and follow through necessary to hire right fit pastors repeatedly.

Chapter 2 therefore falls roughly into halves. The first half embeds the hiring concepts above into the Bible and into biblical principles. This provides church decision-

18 Barna, “Report Examines the State of Mainline Protestant Churches.”

19 For an example of similar types of major components, see Lou Adler, Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams, 3rd ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2007).
makers with the anecdotally expressed “thus saith the Lord” confidence and exhortation to take hiring as seriously as God takes it. The result will be four resolutions that anchor the eventual hiring process into the Bible. The second half of the chapter then will supplement these hiring resolutions with marketplace best hiring practices in order finally to define an idealized, “ready to use” right fit hiring process suitable for the local church.

**Four Resolutions That Anchor A Biblical Right Fit Hiring Process**

What the church needs today is a biblically-grounded, easy to use, “how to” strategy for repeatedly hiring right fit pastors. Though not on the surface, a reflection on some key passages and pictures, surfaces some clear biblical insights regarding such a process.

**The Scriptures and Hiring for Right Fit**

Many Bible students are aware that the Scriptures touch only briefly on employer and employee relationships. The following list contains many of the explicit statements that may be found,

Gene 31:42 God's people should be good workers
Exod 16:23 Work should not intrude into a worker’s time with God
Exod 35:30-31 It is God Who has given man the ability to work
Prov 25:13 Workers should prove trustworthy in their responsibilities
Eccl 9:10 Godly workers should do the best job they can
Ephe 6:6-8 Christians should work as though Jesus were their boss
Titu 2:9-10 Christians should strive to do their best at their job
1 Pet 2:18-21 Christians must submit to their bosses even if they are unjust

While these passages are undeniably of great value, they nevertheless shed little light on how any local church can more repeatedly and reliably hire a right fit kind of pastor.

Fortunately, three well-known New Testament pictures do provide a deeper level of insight into the end result of hiring well. These three pictures – the Trinity, team

---

relationships seen during the spread of the early church, and the metaphor of the Body of Christ – clearly illustrate that “team” is God’s objective for hiring well. These passages and pictures contain the raw materials that can eventually be synthesized into the skeletal framework for a biblical right fit hiring process. As such, these Scriptures reveal three synergistic ingredients for a biblical hiring process. The first ingredient is to align the hiring objective with God’s objective for hiring. The second ingredient is to use four biblical categories to define a right fit. And the third ingredient is to use four different biblical criteria to evaluate a right fit. Thus, the next three sections will address these ingredients individually before combining them into a final framework of a biblical right fit hiring process.

*The Objective of a Biblical Right Fit Hiring Process*

God has shared a tacit but powerful vision for recruiting right fit pastors throughout the Scriptures, seen through the oft-repeated illustrations of doing ministry as a team. Virtually no shepherd of God’s people went it alone. In fact, the New Testament nowhere teaches that one pastor possesses all of the God-given abilities and spiritual gifts to lead and serve a church solo. McIntosh writes,

> The obvious increasing complexity of our world makes it nearly impossible for a single pastor deal with all the issues and needs of the people. Just as the secular world has moved toward specialization and subspecialization, so the church must respond with specialization to effectively minister to the complex needs of people.  

Thus a team made up of such right fit pastors will put team first, understanding further that their contributions to the team will be of a more specialized and role-specific nature. Then too, such a diverse yet complementary team of right fit pastors seem to make a more profound impact than any of the individual team members would alone

---

(Eccl 4:9-10). There, in fact, seems to be a powerful spiritual impact that comes through the synergy of this kind of teamwork as Aubrey Malphurs writes,

> The team concept is not new to any student of the Scriptures, who knows that New Testament ministry is team ministry. This principle is well-illustrated both in the ministries of the Savior and the apostle Paul. It should be kept in mind that their teams were largely responsible for initiating the spread of Christianity around the world, and that twenty centuries later, our faith in Christ can be traced to their teamwork.²²

Therefore, a right fit pastor loves and embraces the philosophy that the context of his ministry will be a pastoral team. He understands that as an active member of a team his strengths will have a synergistic impact while his weaknesses will be made of no account by the strengths of another. No right fit pastor will see himself as a lone ranger or a “silo building” pastor. Rather, a right fit pastor loves and desires to serve the Lord and his local church as an active, fully-engaged, role-specific player on a pastoral team. He comes to the team already equipped with a “better together” ministry attitude. He is not just a “good guy,” but a skilled, role-specific player who delights to serve in a specialized way on his church’s staff team. This is God’s implicit vision for hiring, hiring for team.²³

**God’s objective seen through the Trinity**

But as Malphurs notes team ministry is sprinkled throughout both the Old and New Testaments in more explicit ways as well. And three New Testament pictures well illustrate that God’s vision for doing ministry is accomplished through teams, particularly teams comprised of united, but role-specific members.

---


²³ Charles Olson’s definition of team from “Building and Leading a Pastoral Team” is also insightful, “A team is a group of people with complementary skills, ongoing communication, and collaborative spirits who are committed to a shared purpose to which they hold themselves accountable”, 17.
The first picture of a spiritually powerful, synergistic team is seen within the interdependent relationship of the Holy Trinity, seen of course not just in the New Testament, but throughout the Scriptures. Here, three co-equal and co-eternal Persons with complementary roles and diverse assignments serve one another and also serve together in perfect harmony and unity. Their mutual enjoyment of One another, their unity demonstrated through constant communication, collaboration and commitment to shared purposes becomes the theological standard for doing ministry. Millard Erickson writes regarding the inner workings of the Trinity in this respect,

The function of one member of the Trinity may for a time be subordinate to one or both of the other members, but that does not mean he is in any way inferior in essence. Each of the three persons of the Trinity has had, for a period of time, a particular function unique to himself. This is to be understood as a temporary role for the purpose of accomplishing a given end, not a change in his status or essence.\(^\text{24}\)

The Godhead, in fact, models its Own perfect illustration for how ministry ought to be done. Though no human team of pastors will ever achieve the perfect Trinitarian unity within diversity, it is nonetheless the standard for doing ministry together – realizing perfect unity, perfect diversity, perfect interdependent compatibility, all resulting in a better together impact.

**God’s objective seen through New Testament partnerships**

The second picture of powerful, synergistic ministry team is seen through well-known New Testament partnerships.\(^\text{25}\) Hardly a work of God is accomplished in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, outside of partnerships. In the Book of Acts, Paul and Barnabas are sent out together with the Good News (Acts 13:2). Later, Paul and Barnabas appoint Elders for the local churches they have founded (Acts 14:23). In almost


\(^{25}\) Olson, “Building and Leading A Pastoral Team”, 20.
every letter Paul writes, he shares the credit with Timothy or another partner (Romans 16:21-22; 1 Corinthians 16:10-12; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1). It is with the help of and through Titus that elders are appointed on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5). And Peter passionately exhorts the elders together to shepherd God’s people (1 Peter 5:1-5). The men in these partnerships shared life, hardship, accountability and purpose and accomplished the ministry together. From just these real-life examples, God’s men inevitably serve Him alongside each other, complimenting each other and spurring each other on toward greater godliness, effectiveness and influence for the glory of Christ. It is their combined, unified, complementary efforts that the Spirit of God seems to empower. These teams truly ministered better together.

**God’s objective seen through the Body of Christ**

The third and final picture of the powerful, potential impact a coordinated and truly interdependent spiritual team has comes through the metaphor of the Body of Christ. In First Corinthians 12, Paul uses the metaphor of a human body to depict how a local church, made up of many diverse but complementary body “members” each having their own spiritual gifts, should combine in maturity and act as a unified whole. John MacArthur writes about this diversity, unity and spiritual power within any local Body of Christ,

While illustrating the diversity of spiritual gifts (12:4-11) the apostle repeatedly stresses their one source in God (vv. 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11). He also stresses their one purpose, to reveal the Holy Spirit’s work and power for the common good of the church (v. 7). These unifying realities lead the apostle’s thought to a general discussion of the oneness of the redeemed community.

In the present passage [12:12-19] he explains and illustrates the nature and importance of the unity of the church itself, and then again the importance of diversity as a key factor in that unity. The diversity of the church is a God-ordained means of bringing the fellowship to oneness, but unless each diverse member recognizes and accepts his part in the whole body, diversity will divide
rather than unite, destroy rather than build up, bring discord rather than harmony, and result in self-serving rather than self-giving.\textsuperscript{26}

Rendle and Beaumont concur and use the same chapter of Corinthians to draw out implications for doing ministry using Paul’s body metaphor. They write,

(1) The reason we have gifts is to serve God and others for the ultimate outcome of glorifying God;
(2) We all have different gifts, including the leader;
(3) No one has all the gifts, including the leader;
(4) Like the parts of a body, we all have different roles to play and responsibilities to accomplish;
(5) No one part is capable of playing all the parts or learning how to play all the parts. Listen as the eye might, it cannot and will never hear like the ear.\textsuperscript{27}

The Scriptures teach that neither the Body of Christ nor a “Body-team” of pastors can be viewed as just a collection of interchangeable parts. There is a divinely-designed role-specificity for each pastor which must both be discovered and honored within every right fit team. Paul teaches the Corinthians then and the church today that pastoral team members need each other, that they are dependent on each other and that their unified, coordinated, Spirit-empowered togetherness in ministry is necessary to edify the Body of Christ and extend the Kingdom of God.

When such team ministry is realized, when the right men with the right gifts and talents are in the right roles and serving together, multiplicative better together benefits seem to accompany it. Olson notes four such benefits: (1) their partnership yields greater productivity than it would individually (Eccl 4:9-10); (2) their collaboration generates more creative, superior outcomes (Prov 15:22); (3) their burnout factor is reduced (Exod 18:13-26); and (4) their “better together” humility allows them to


\textsuperscript{27} Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont, \textit{When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations} (Herndon: Alban Institute, 2007), 17.
incorporate and build on the contributions of others (John 4:37-38). A team is a wonderful biblical picture – diversely gifted and talented yet united pastors serving together as one toward a common purpose, namely the vision of their local church. Clearly, God’s vision for hiring is to see divinely-designed, role-specific players recruited for each church’s staff role. God’s vision for church hiring decision-makers is to hire with a team mindset.

Malphurs concludes this section on the fundamental importance of church hiring decision-makers having a team mindset. He offers a summary and a warning as he writes,

“In light of the ministries of Jesus and Paul, there can be little doubt that New Testament ministry was team ministry. Some leaders have proved slow to learn this basic lesson. They become so motivated by their own vision that they run far out ahead of their teams and attempt to implement it on their own. They function as a team of one.”

God’s vision for doing ministry is one of team, not for teams of one. God’s vision is that hiring decision-makers in any local church seek to recruit a team comprised of pastors who are skilled, role-specific players who in maturity and humility bring their specialized gifts and talents to bear on the shared purposes of the Lord and the vision of that local church. And as this is God’s vision, it is a vision for hiring that decision-makers should strive to honor and emulate, just as they would strive to honor any other guidance springing from the Word of God.

Thus the first ingredient necessary for solidly constructing a biblical process skeleton is to anchor the church’s desired outcome into God’s desired outcome – hiring diversely gifted yet complementary teammates for the staff team. No biblical hiring process may continue any longer to settle for the first “good guy” it finds and hire him,


without first knowing that he will be a right fit for the open role. It is about developing a heart-felt conviction that getting it right makes a difference. The biblically-grounded objective is for hiring decision-makers to know that they are looking for a hand, to know what they expect out of that hand, and then to fill that role with a divinely-designed hand and not a mouth. But just trying harder to get it right will be frustrating and fruitless without using biblical criteria to define a right fit.

Four Biblical Criteria Define Right Fit

To pursue God’s vision for doing ministry is to pursue partnering with Him to build a highly synergistic pastoral team. This is the objective of a biblical right fit hiring process and the first ingredient of an eventual definition. The second ingredient comes from knowing that to correctly pursue team requires focusing on the principles of role and fit. “Role,” of course, means that if a “square hole” exists on a pastoral team, then hiring decision-makers must seek to fill it with a “square peg.” In other words, if an open pastoral role requires primarily a divinely-designed hand to serve, then filling that role with a divinely-designed mouth who longs to speak will only lead to low team effectiveness and frustration down the road. Thus, an open role will primarily be defined in terms of the desired outcomes and the spiritual gift needed to rightly fill it with divine effectiveness.

“Fit,” on the other hand, speaks to the degree of snugness or tightness between any square peg and open square hole. It means recognizing that one candidate will be better suited, will fit more snugly, in a particular role on a team than will another. It means that one candidate will fit better in the role and with the team than will another. Church hiring decision-makers then must first define the size and shape of the open hole.

30 Again, Olson’s definition of team is well-stated, “A team is a group of people with complementary skills, ongoing communication, and collaborative spirits who are committed to a shared purpose to which they hold themselves accountable.”
and then define the size and shape of the ideal peg, the right fit candidate, who will best fill it. Furthermore, those definitions must align with biblical categories or criteria not the world’s.

Objective, measurable and biblical categories of fit have been put forth by Charles Olson and Bill Hybels. In 1996 Olson proposed three distinct categories for determining degrees of fit between a candidate and the open role: (1) Character – the candidate must possess a heart of godliness and authenticity; (2) Competency – the candidate’s capacity, his ability to perform successfully; and (3) Compatibility – the candidate’s compatibility with the church, the church’s vision, the staff team and the ministry responsibility.  

In the 2009 edition of *Courageous Leadership*, Hybels proposes three distinct categories of fit, but then suggests a fourth many chapters later. His four categories of fit are as follows: (1) Character – the need to have confidence in a candidate’s walk with Jesus; (2) Competence – the candidate’s ability to perform at a superior level in his role; (3) Chemistry – a relational fit between the candidate with himself and other team members; and (4) Calling – a candidate’s full surrender and complete availability to God’s mission for their life.  

Clearly Olson’s criteria are seminal as the virtual identity between the lists show: (1) both emphasize the need for excellent, maturing Christian character; (2) both emphasize the need for a high level of competence or an ability to do the role in a high-quality way; and (3) both emphasize a more intangible but real sense of chemistry or compatibility with his closest staff teammates. Hybels addition of a fourth category of

---

31 Olson, “Building and Leading A Pastoral Team”, 90, 97, 103.

32 Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 81, 83, 84, 186.

33 A quick review of the publishing dates reveals that Olson’s work of 1996 precedes Hybel’s work of 2009 or even of its first edition in 2002.
“calling,” however, improves upon Olson’s work; a candidate’s sense of divine calling should not be overlooked. After all, it is his team that is being assembled or enhanced. Thus, these four C’s objectively and measurably specify a holistic, biblically-based “scorecard” for defining and evaluating the degree of fit between any candidate and an open role.

Thus this project will embrace four categories for defining a right fit, hereafter referred to as the 4 C’s: (1) there must be a maturity of Christian Character to serve well and long-term on a pastoral team; (2) there must be some evidence of a divine Calling into ministry and perhaps even to a specific team role; (3) there must be an appropriate level of Competence to perform well in that role, likely demonstrated by a past track record of accomplishment; and (4) there must be an appropriate sense of Compatibility with the church and with the rest of the staff team. And since these four categories are so integral to the definition of a biblical right fit hiring process, it is relevant to examine each one more thoroughly from the Scriptures.

Character

The first criterion for defining a right fit focuses on confirming that a candidate possesses a high moral character. First Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9 teach that internalizing right doctrine leads to right living and having right relationships with others. A right fit pastor must have a godly heart and a walk that is above reproach before all others in every area of his life. He must be a living embodiment of the marks of maturity set out in these passages. J. Hampton Keathly makes five observations regarding the idea of living “above reproach,”

(1) It means there will always be room for improvement and growth in the qualities mentioned in these passages. Being “above reproach” is not a demand for perfection before selection. If that were so, no man would ever be qualified.
(2) However, it teaches us that being above reproach in relation to these qualities means that a man’s lifestyle is such that, generally speaking, no one can legitimately accuse him of conduct which is unbefitting a mature believer.
(3) It means that these qualities should exist in a man’s life to such a degree that they stand out as prominent and consistent characteristics. They are clearly distinguishable, but there will be room for growth and times when he may fall short.

(4) It means that, because none of us is perfect, we should not expect our leaders to walk on water. They all have feet of clay.

(5) However, being above reproach does mean we should look for those men who are mature examples of Christlikeness, and we should expect them to continue to grow.34

A man of high moral character has allowed the Lord Jesus to invade and infiltrate every sphere of his life and his every relationship: toward God and his Word; toward himself; toward his family; toward others; and toward the material things of this world.

Every man whom God appoints to serve as an under-shepherd of his church must have first demonstrated an ability to lead himself. He must be a man who can humbly and dependently yet confidently lead a life worth following as a living example of the Christian life, being transformed by the power and ongoing work of Jesus Christ, his Spirit and his Word. While giftedness is probably alluded to in the passage with “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2) referring to the gift of teaching, the primary focus of this passage is not on giftedness but on godly character. A pastor’s giftedness, skills and abilities are not unimportant and will be addressed shortly, but the first criterion for a “right fit” pastor is one who has a demonstrated, growing, maturing, vibrant and godly character as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Gene Getz, in fact, dedicates an entire appendix of his book Elders and Leaders to determining a leader’s “maturity quotient.”35

Without mature character there can be no “fit” for any pastoral role regardless of how impressive the rest of the package looks.


**Calling**

The second criterion for defining a right fit focuses on confirming a sense of a candidate’s divine calling. The idea has to do with the fact that church leaders in the Scriptures seem to be appointed by the Spirit of God rather than exclusively and unilaterally picked by men. In Acts 20:28 Paul clearly states that the Ephesian elders had been “made” overseers by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word translated “made” often carries the idea of “appointed” and is translated thusly six times in the New American Standard Bible (John 15:16; 1 Cor 12:28; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 2:11; Heb 1:2; 1 Pet 2:8).36 Also in Acts 1:23-26, the assembly seeks God’s appointment for Judas’ replacement, and in Acts 13:2 the Holy Spirit, according to his own good pleasure and will, calls out Paul and Barnabas for their missionary assignment.

Since God seems to appoint men to church leadership, what then is the church’s role or responsibility in the selection process? Keathley again offers some valuable insight,

> It is the responsibility of the church to recognize the emergence of those men [for leadership] whom the Holy Spirit has prepared and appointed by the qualities of their lives from the standpoint of (a) their character, (b) their giftedness, and (c) their burden and concern for the body of Christ. Thus, while the local flock is asked to participate in the selection process, its job is not so much to elect or select such men as it is to confirm the Spirit’s work and thus His appointment and gift of certain men to serve either as elders or deacons.37

Since those whom God calls, God equips with the appropriate spiritual gift (1 Peter 4:10), the local church who confirms a candidate’s sense of calling will also gain a level of confidence that the right gifts and talents needed to fulfill the role are also present. This confirmation, though admittedly subjective, will come through prayer, honest

---

37 Ibid., 4.
conversation and reviewing the candidate’s track record that demonstrates a level of perseverance, sacrifice and divinely-empowered accomplishment of a shepherd in the Lord’s service (John 10:11-13).

**Competence**

The third criterion for defining a right fit focuses on evaluating a candidate’s level of competency. Competency is a person’s capacity and capability for performing in a particular role at a high level. Psalm 78:72 says, “And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.” Competency is the “skillful hands” facet of David’s life and training. It might include such things as education, experience, special in-born abilities, qualities or characteristics as well as natural or learned interpersonal relationship skills.³⁸

Competence emphasizes the idea of role and as such includes the area of spiritual giftedness. Without the appropriate spiritual gift to fulfill the functions and responsibilities of his role, a pastor would be left to serve in an area of his weakness, not in an area of God’s empowerment. In First Timothy 3:2 Paul told Timothy that an elder must be able to teach, perhaps at least suggesting that an elder would have the spiritual gift of teaching. As well, Peter teaches that “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10) thus linking a believer’s divine calling to his divinely-originating spiritual giftedness. Whom God has called, God has equipped.

³⁸ For example, Brad Smart in Appendix A of *Topgrading* identifies 50 distinct competencies in the intellectual, personal, interpersonal, managerial, leadership and motivational realms or dimensions. To further illustrate the broad range of what “competence” encompasses, under the dimension of intellect for example Smart seeks to assess intelligence, analysis skills, judgment and decision-making ability, conceptual ability, creativity, strategic skills, pragmatism, risk taking, education, experience and track record. For each potential candidate all of these various facets are qualitatively assessed and compared with a minimum acceptable rating, 482-84.
Perhaps Rick Warren’s concept of S.H.A.P.E. captures the holistic sense of a pastor’s competency. In this acronym, “S” stands for spiritual gifts; “H” stands for what portion of ministry makes a pastor’s heart beat fast; “A” stands for natural, in-born abilities; “P” stands for personality; and “E” stands for life experiences, both positive and painful, that have helped divinely form that person into who they are at the present time. Paul reminds Timothy that his upbringing, spiritual gifting and doctrinal education under Paul himself make him a “right fit” pastor, though he may feel personally inadequate or people might think he is lacking in some way (1 Timothy 4:6-16). Paul reminds Timothy that he has the maturity of character for the team, he has the calling from God to serve in that specific role, and that he already possesses the appropriate level of competency to serve at a high level. In this sense, Paul “hired” well; Timothy was a “right fit” pastor for that congregation.

And as the body analogy of First Corinthians 12 makes clear, different roles in the body will require different competencies. For example, a “liver” who has been made to serve in the background of the body of Christ has not been divinely designed to serve out front as a “mouth” has been. That is why church decision-makers must know what competencies they are looking for before they begin searching and what threshold of gift, skill, ability, etc. is the minimum acceptable standard. Frustration and heartache surely await those who try to take short-cuts here. Bill Hybels writes personally about the hurt that can be caused by being overly optimistic rather than realistic about an individual’s competence,

environment, and their ability to deal with a crisis. Time and again, a stiff penalty was paid by all.  

Competence, being well-equipped to perform at a high level in the given role, is a facet of getting fit “right” that cannot be overlooked. 

Competence also touches on the idea of the degree of fit. Lado and Wilson note the benefit to any organization who emphasizes fit,

Research on strategic selection and staffing (Gerstein & Reisman, 1983; Olian & Rynes, 1984) suggests that organizations whose hiring practices engender a good match (or fit) between the characteristics of managers and the requirements of organizational strategy will likely achieve superior performance compared to firms whose selection practices do not emphasize manager-strategy fit (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1986). Since no two candidates are identical, competence logically suggests that one pastor between two finalists will be better suited for a particular role than the other. He will fit more snugly than the other so to speak. Simply by virtue of natural or learned abilities or by supernatural spiritual gifting, one candidate will be relatively more competent than another candidate and might therefore perform more effectively and at a higher level than will another. Spiritually speaking, every believer in Christ has some level of competence from the Spirit; no one has been left out (1 Corinthians 12:11). However, not every candidate is equally competent for every given role. A pastoral candidate’s competence, including his spiritual gift, must be assessed in order to determine not only his proper role, but his degree of fit with the role and the team.

40 Bill Hybels, Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 80.

41 Augustine A. Lado and Mary C. Wilson, “Human Resource Systems and Sustained Competitive Advantage: A Competency-Based Perspective,” Academy of Management Review 19, no. 4 (1994): 710. While the church as organism is certainly more than just an organization it is certainly no less than one either.
Compatibility

The fourth and final criterion for defining a right fit aims at gaining a sense of a potential candidate’s compatibility with the church and with the existing pastoral team. Per Olson, this compatibility should be determined along three distinct lines: (1) theological compatibility; (2) interpersonal compatibility; and (3) compatibility with the function and responsibilities of the role.  

Theological compatibility between a candidate and a church is high priority. Paul’s travels in Acts as well as almost every letter he wrote to local churches or their leaders illustrate how tirelessly he fought to preserve and separate true doctrine from doctrines that were false or flawed. Paul’s fight suggests that a lack of compatibility between any candidate and a church’s doctrine and philosophy of ministry should be reviewed carefully for a sense of “right fit.”

Interpersonal compatibility between a candidate and a church and the pastoral team is also important to evaluate. Such a compatibility issue might be illustrated by Paul and Barnabas agreeing to disagree over John-Mark (Acts 15:36-41). At one time both Paul and Barnabas recognized being separated unto God for their assignment as partners. But then

As they embarked on their renewed journey, Paul and Barnabas stumbled coming out of the gate. Barnabas was desirous of taking John, called Mark, along with them also. The imperfect tense of the Greek verb translated was desirous shows that Barnabas was persistent. Equally adamant, Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work….After John Mark’s earlier failure, Paul had no confidence in him. The tough, battle-hardened soldier of Christ had no use for deserters. On the other hand, gentle, encouraging Barnabas insisted on giving his cousin (Col. 4:10) a second chance.

42 Olson, “Building and Leading A Pastoral Team”, 103. Coalesced his four factors into three.

Eventually there arose such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another. *Paroxusmos* (sharp disagreement) is the root of the English word *paroxysm*. Their partnership dissolved not amicably but with violent emotions, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus (Barnabas’s home—Acts 4:36).  

Now, seemingly without permission from God or from a lack of spiritual maturity on either man’s part, Paul and Barnabas divide sharply over John-Mark to such an extent that they can no longer minister together. Maturity of Christian character can certainly overcome most every interpersonal relationship issues. But it seems here that some interpersonal issues cannot be overcome immediately by maturity alone; they become issues of compatibility or interpersonal chemistry and regardless of who is right or wrong, ministry cannot be done together for the time being. They agreed to disagree and went their separate ways. This is definitely an issue of fit.

Finally, a church must assess the degree of compatibility between a candidate and the function and responsibilities of the role. Here there is a great deal of overlap with competence. Again, there is some insight to be gained by reflecting again on the situation of John-Mark. Perhaps he was recruited into ministry not because of “what he knew,” but rather because of “who he knew.” If those who recruited him understood the function and responsibilities of the role and then truly evaluated John-Mark against those criteria perhaps he would not have returned home early; perhaps he would never have gone in the first place. Since the reader is never told for certain, one can only speculate.

However, the role John-Mark was asked to fill was never truly defined and articulated, and John-Mark was never truly evaluated against it in order to assess his compatibility.

---


45 The *Life Application Study Bible* expresses it this way, “God works even through conflict and disagreements. Later, Mark became vital to Paul’s ministry (Colossians 4:10). Christians do not always agree, but problems can be solved by agreeing to disagree and letting God work his will,” 1858.

46 Westing, *Church Staff Handbook: How to Build an Effective Ministry Team*, 107-12.
degree of fit with the role and its responsibilities. Perhaps Barnabas thought John-Mark was a “good guy” and would be a “great fit” for the ministry team, so he was brought aboard. Later, of course, John-Mark proved his mettle and became a valuable ministry partner to Paul (2 Timothy 4:11). But what heartache there must have been all-around when John-Mark “suddenly” turned out not to be the man Paul thought he had hired. And it could have been avoided, perhaps, by remembering the mandate to get role and fit right.

God’s vision for doing ministry is generally one of team. This is the sole objective for any biblical right fit hiring process and is the first ingredient for defining such. But to be invited onto such a team requires that decision-makers first define their need in terms of role and minimum fit, and then interview and hire for best fit. To this end four objective, measurable and biblical C’s have been examined from the Scriptures in order to allow any church to better define its open role and to evaluate the degree of any candidate’s fit for that role. This is the second ingredient in the eventual hiring process definition. Using these four C’s serves to more objectively pre-define what is “right” for the open role and the candidate who will fit it best by (1) confirming the maturity of his Character; (2) confirming his sense of Calling to the role and to the team; (3) confirming an appropriate level of Competence exists to serve at a high level in the role; and (4) confirming that there is an appropriate level of Compatibility with the church’s doctrine, team culture and the function and responsibilities of the role. Every candidate then must be objectively and consistently “scored” against these biblical criteria.

Certainly this is not presented as an absolute statement. The prophet Jeremiah seems to have been called to walk alone in his ministry for decades. However, the general principle of ministry “team” is consistently found throughout the New Testament and therefore is a general statement of truth and expectation, allowing for exceptions according to God’s good pleasure.
The Scriptures specify four categories for defining a right fit. But do they also give any guidance regarding the process that will more repeatedly, accurately and fairly surface and evaluate right fit pastors? The answer is yes, and so the next section will put the spotlight on “how” rather than on “what.”

Four Biblical Criteria Surface Right Fit

God’s objective for hiring is that every local church would partner with Him for building a truly godly, synergistic pastoral team. Such a team not only walks after his own Trinitarian model, but seems to experience his divine blessing and multiplicative empowerment. But before a new member can be invited onto that pastoral team, church decision-makers must use biblical categories and establish minimum thresholds in those categories for defining the open role and evaluating each candidate’s degree of fit. To that end, four C’s (1) Character; (2) Calling; (3) Competence; and (4) Compatibility have examined from key biblical passages and pictures. Yet how each candidate should be evaluated for fit has yet to be defined. It turns out that the course down which a biblical, pastoral hiring process should travel has two side-by-side lanes: (1) it must be Spirit-directed; and (2) it must be relational, objective and thorough. This is the third and final ingredient eventually to be synthesized into a definition of a biblical right fit hiring process. This ingredient examines who should have input into the evaluation process once the definition of the ideal round peg has been made to fill the open round hole.

Gaining Input from the Holy Spirit through Prayer

No hiring process can rightly be called biblical that is not saturated in prayer and directed by God’s Holy Spirit. This tangible demonstration of dependence on the Father is the New Testament requirement as modeled by the Lord Jesus Himself. According to Luke 6:12-13, the Lord prayed all night before selecting his twelve apostles, “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of
them, whom he also designated as apostles….’ The Lord persistently, diligently and
dependently sought his Father’s direction through prayer. By this He reminds his church
that such leadership recruiting is first and foremost a sacred, spiritual task.

Such a scene is surely meant not just to relate what the Lord did, but is also
surely left as a model for seeking the Spirit’s direction regarding any pastoral search. As
has been previously pointed out, the Spirit of God calls and appoints leadership for his
Church. He therefore has ideas regarding whom a church should hire and his input must
be sought first. Persistent, diligent prayer must be the starting point, the fuel and the
celebratory conclusion to any biblical hiring process. A candidate may have the character,
he may be called to a pastoral team somewhere in the Kingdom, he may have a monster
competency to do a superior job in the very role that is vacant and he may be completely
compatible with a church and a team, but he may not be *his* church’s man. Decision-
makers must consciously, diligently and persistently ask the Lord to provide his right
man with the right gifts and talents needed for their open role and then trust Him to
provide.

Dependent prayer keeps God’s sovereignty front and center in the decision-
making process. Young David in the Old Testament clearly did not “measure up” for
king in the sight of his father, as he wasn’t even invited to the feast with Samuel but was
instead left in the field tending the sheep (1 Samuel 16:11). Nor would he have
“measured up” initially in Samuel’s sight had he been there, who thought the tall and
handsome, first-born Eliab would be the Lord’s anointed (1 Samuel 16:6-7). But in the
end Samuel’s sensitivity to the Lord’s voice rather than just what he saw before him led
him to anoint David as Israel’s next king.

Further, just a cursory look at David, Jesus’ disciples, the Apostle Paul and
Timothy remind the observant Bible student that at times God taps “non-traditional”
candidates for his work; men who do not appear qualified to do the job. God looks upon
the heart or character first and foremost (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Timothy 3:1-7) rather than the
outward physical appearance or human perception of competence and/or experience and therefore so should the church hiring decision-maker. When seen through this lens, Character and Calling might take pre-eminence in hiring over Competence and Chemistry.⁴⁸

Perhaps Paul’s admonition to Timothy to identify men with a maturity of character and level of competence (1 Timothy 3:1-7) combined with his declaration to the elders in Ephesus (Acts 20:28) that they had been called by the Spirit of God portrays a balance between God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility in the hiring process. God’s Spirit has and is calling out men to shepherd his church flocks (Acts 20:28). In fact, as the example of David illustrates, God may even go before a church and bring it a leader before the church even knows it has a need. But the fact that God is sovereignly and supernaturally at work should not preclude hiring decision-makers from doing due diligence to discern God’s man. The Lord told his disciples that God fed the ravens their food, but they also would have known that He gave the ravens wings to search food out (Luke 12:22-26). Thus, a church hiring decision-maker who completely relies on prayer and otherwise sits on his hands waiting on God to lead a man off the street to fill an open role is out of balance on the side of sovereignty. On the other hand, the decision-maker who pursues only candidates based on appearance and track record is out of balance in the direction of human responsibility.

As strategic and important as hiring well is to the local church, these brief biblical vignettes strongly suggest that hiring pastors can never become rote, mechanical or formulaic. Rather, hiring well and doing it repeatedly is a dynamic, Spirit-led process that combines God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility through dependent prayer and diligent work.

---

⁴⁸ Getz, Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church. Getz would likely even advocate that it is only Character that is of consequence for Christian leadership.
Gaining Input from Thorough, Objective, Relational Interviews

Even a cursory review of his letters shows that Paul was a man of prayer. But he was also a man who had some definite ideas on the role he and his leaders played regarding recruiting or “hiring” elders for the churches he helped found. In fact, 1 Timothy seems to bubble with insight regarding not only what to look for in a pastor, but how to go about looking for him. First, Paul notes that some men may have a godly ambition for church leadership, which is a good thing (1 Timothy 3:1). Yet he goes on to instruct Timothy that it takes more than a right desire to lead, it takes solid character (1 Timothy 3:2-7) to be truly qualified. This character standard scrutinizes a man’s relationship to his Lord, to his Word, to himself, to his wife and family, to those in his workplace and to his material possessions. He must have a proven track record of leading himself, his family and living a life above reproach before those outside the church or he will not be qualified to lead Christ’s Church. Thus, Paul exhorts Timothy to use objective, biblical criteria alongside fervent prayer in order to find a “right fit” pastor.

Further, this standard of character and conduct must be affirmed and confirmed by others. Presumably his wife and/or children and at least the first-hand testimony of his co-workers might be solicited if they were not personally known and interviewed by Timothy. It seems Timothy felt no urge to hire impulsively or prematurely. He was instructed by Paul perhaps to interview a candidate’s wife and family as well as maybe his neighbors and co-workers first. Only after this was completed did Paul give him the freedom to make the hire.

The tremendous level of objectivity and thoroughness revealed in First Timothy should remind every decision-maker of the sacred, spiritual trust given by God to the leadership of his church regarding hiring. Today, decision-makers can follow this level of thoroughness through interviews, dinners with spouses, reference checks and the like. It seems Timothy saw to his interviews personally, and completed his own reference checks. Such is the nature of a well-done process designed to surface God’s right fit
pastor for any church’s open role. It is only after thoroughly and relationally collecting input from the Lord and from others that can be compared against objective, biblical criteria – all saturated in prayer – that a church will find the right fit match it is seeking.

The ingredients for constructing a biblical right fit hiring process have now been assembled and examined. The following section offers practical steps for use by church hiring decision-makers.

_Synthesizing the Outline of a Biblical Right Fit Hiring Process_

Combining the data of (1) maintaining God’s objective for a hiring process, (2) using four biblical categories for defining right fit, and (3) using four biblical criteria to describe God’s process for evaluating a right fit into something useful and cohesive is a somewhat non-linear process. Nevertheless these materials can be synthesized into four biblically-based resolutions that anchor a biblical right fit hiring process to the Scriptures. The word “resolve” has been chosen to reflect the fact that these four statements have been based on or derived from the Scriptures. Therefore, for the church hiring decision-maker they are more than suggestions or recommendations. These four resolutions do, in fact, express and outline a biblical process for right fit hiring and so the following explanations strive to reveal the logic behind their synthesis.

First, pursuing God’s objective for team requires that church decision-makers hire for role and fit. If a hand is needed, no local church can settle for a foot, though the foot may be immediately available. Rather, the size and shape of each candidate must be assessed against the size and shape of the open role. Further, if given the choice, common sense would suggest hiring the very best hand available and affordable that fits the role, the team and the church. To hire well is to pre-determine to be aligned with God’s objective of hiring for team. It is to develop and hold a conviction that getting it right truly does make a positive difference.
But to remain true to such a conviction will require decision-makers to pursue more persistent, direction-seeking prayer and greater discipline as the Scriptures showed, if the earlier data is any indication.\(^49\) To pursue God’s objective for team requires decision-makers to diligently pray as if everything depended on Him, while working as hard as possible as if everything depended on them. But striving in all of his energy which so powerfully works within them (Colo 1:29) is to honor his vision, desire and objective for ministry and thus for hiring. Resolution 1 therefore is about maintaining a conviction to partner with God to “get it right,” even though the search process make take a more courageous level of patience to see it through. Resolution 1 may then be stated as follows: (1) The Conviction – Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction. A biblical right fit hiring process is committed to fulfilling God’s objective for team.

Second, to hire for role and fit requires church decision-makers to use biblical, objective and measurable criteria to pre-define what the open role looks like and to pre-define their ideal hiring target. Every local church must begin by realistically, not idealistically, defining their open role in terms of their desired outcomes and minimum levels of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility. Next they must define the right fit hire’s minimum thresholds of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility required to perform at a high level in that role. In this way a far more accurate picture of the right fit candidate is painted. To illustrate by way of a simple picture, if a local church is seeking a square peg to fill a square hole two inches on each side, filling it with a square peg one inch on each side definitely captures the sense of role, but completely misses the sense of fit; there is an insufficient “snugness.”

\(^{49}\) Barna, “Report Examines the State of Mainline Protestant Churches.”
On the other hand, if the same church needed to fill the same square hole two inches on a side, they would specify the minimum size square peg they would accept, say one and one-half inches on a side, and then use that one and one-half inch square peg as their ideal hiring target. To hire for role and fit requires decision-makers to establish minimum acceptable thresholds in each of the four C’s before they initiate a search and then to conduct that search as objectively as possible. Resolution 2 therefore focuses on the ideal hiring target and defining a picture of him painted with the 4 C’s. It may be stated as follows: (2) The Target – Resolve to define a new team member’s role and minimum degree of fit using outcomes and the 4 C criteria of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility. Thus a biblical right fit hiring process defines its target and then uses its own “scorecard” to put some kind of consistent, objective measures on fit.

The third resolution synthesized from the biblical material focuses on where to look for candidates who might meet the “bull’s eye” of the hiring target. It is really a corollary to Resolution 2. Paul taught Timothy in First Timothy 3:1 that having the desire to be an elder, while noble, was by itself insufficient to be “hired,” as he proceeded in the next few verses to describe the character and competence issues a man must first meet. Resolution 3 therefore focuses on turning over every stone or looking down less traveled paths in order to find candidates who, at the very least, meet the minimum thresholds specified under Resolution 2. It means recruiting qualified candidates instead of settling for “almost.” It may be stated as follows: (3) The Candidates – Resolve to seriously consider only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required thresholds of fit. Establishing this demarcation between candidates both protects God’s objective for hiring and preserves the requirements of a biblical right fit.

The fourth and final resolution is that church decision-makers must acknowledge that seeking right fit pastors is first of all a spiritual process, then a practical process. Persistent, direction-seeking prayer is non-negotiable as expressed under
Resolution 1. It is the Lord’s Own model. Prayer must precede and fuel the entire hiring process. If God’s vision for doing ministry is primarily through teams, then hiring according to his objective is truly a sacred, spiritual assignment and no local church decision-maker would dare proceed down the road any other way. Prayer is essential to the evaluation process.

But the process is also winsome and practical, carried out relationally and thoroughly, gathering needed input from the Holy Spirit, others and the candidate himself. This relationally gathered data is then compared with the scorecard of Resolution 2 before declaring a match has been found. A candidate’s desire or availability alone is insufficient grounds, as a rule, for making a right fit hire. A right fit pastor, on the other hand, will more than likely be surfaced and recognized through a Spirit-directed, relational and thorough candidating process that has a clear idea of what it seeks; just as Paul counseled Timothy. Resolution 4 may be stated as follows: (4) The Matching Process – Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team. Thus the evaluation process or a biblical right fit hire is done primarily through prayer and through face-to-face interviews.

\textit{A Preliminary Right Fit Hiring Process Outline}

One of this project’s goals is to help every local church more repeatedly make more right fit pastoral hires. Thus a “next-step” goal toward that end is to consolidate these four biblically-grounded resolutions into a preliminary “how to” outline for hiring right fit pastors.

(1) (The Conviction) Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction.

(2) (The Target) Resolve to define a new team member’s role and the minimum degree of fit using outcomes and the 4 C criteria of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility.
(3) (The Candidates) Resolve to seriously consider only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required thresholds of fit.

(4) (The Matching Process) Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team.

Indeed, when this outline is completed it will be become the idealized right fit definition that will be compared with two trend-setting church’s hiring processes.

So far, this project has anchored four biblically-based right fit hiring resolutions into the Scriptures. But to be useful to any local church decision-maker this skeleton needs muscle and flesh. The skeleton needs practical, doable best practices that affirm but are subordinate to these scripturally-based bones. It needs tried and tested marketplace practices to facilitate these ends. Thus, Chapter 2 will now turn its attention to a fully-operational, state of the art marketplace hiring process that has been shown to deliver desired results in the business world. Their best practices, along with the church’s current best practices, will be examined in order to adopt or adapt some practical, workable ideas and/or insights that complement and support the skeletal principles and resolutions above in a Christ-honoring way.

**Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 1**

Surprisingly perhaps, the hiring process described by best practices from the marketplace in many ways imitates the biblical right fit hiring process described above. It begins with a commitment to put the team first, and advocates hiring onto the team only by role and by fit. It does not advocate a “one size fits all” type of employee, but instead defines each open role with realistic, objective criteria of outcomes and behaviors. Then using an objective and thorough interviewing process it evaluates a candidate’s fit against that criteria using primarily their demonstrated track record of delivering key results in the past. In short, one might say that the marketplace is committed to a team concept, then establishes written targets defining what they are looking for, searches for the right
candidates, then interviews objectively and thoroughly in order to enhance their chances of repeatedly making a right hire. It is certainly not a spiritual process, but seems to share many of the same principles. Interestingly enough, the marketplace hiring process begins with a focus on the team and putting the good of the team first.

Furthermore, the marketplace literature is terse – there will be two kinds of businesses in the future: those who have embraced a heart-felt conviction that nothing matters more to their future longevity and performance than putting the right staff in the right places, and those who do not. The for-profit world has discovered that getting the people decisions right should take a back seat to nothing; not vision, not strategy, not technology, and not programs or products. In the past decade they have embraced that staffing decisions are highest priority.

*In the Marketplace*

The astute hiring executive in the marketplace is much like a sports team’s talent scout. In the marketplace, as well as on the playing field, getting the very best of the right kind of talent into an organization makes the biggest difference to its capacity and capability. Geoff Smart and Randy Street prominently highlight this truth in large bold letters on the dust jacket of their book, *Who*, as “Solve your #1 problem.”50 Marshall Goldsmith, author of *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There*, agrees saying “Knowing what to do is not the major challenge faced by executives – finding who to do it is!”51 Recruiting and assimilating the most talented staff is the wise hiring executive’s number one priority, number one challenge and number one source for enhancing his organization’s performance.


51 Ibid.
Hiring the Best Talent Makes the Biggest Difference

Talent matters. Smart and Street explored how much getting the best talent on board mattered to 400 executives. They write, “We asked these leaders what factors contributed the most to business success. They told us that ‘management talent’ was over half the equation [52%]. The only other category to draw even 20 percent of the vote was execution. Strategy finished below that, at 17 percent, and external factors – interest rates, for example – still further back at 11 percent.”52 Recruiting the best of the right talent into an organization exerts – by more than a factor of two – the greatest leverage on future success.

On the gridiron, talent might be measured by strength, speed or technique. But what does the marketplace mean by the term talent? “In the most general sense, talent is the sum of a person’s abilities – his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow,” writes Michaels in The War for Talent.53 Talent is the short-hand word for describing the holistic sum of a person. Some believe talent is in-born. Others like Geoff Colvin, author of Talent is Overrated, argue that talent is something that can be developed and grown through what he terms “deliberate practice” springing from a motivation of knowing what you want to do.54 Yet regardless of how an individual comes by talent, recruiting the best of the right kind of talent should be one of an organization’s recurring, top three annual goals if it wishes to separate itself from its competition.55

52 Ibid., 147-8.
Respected researchers and authors have been exhorting both for-profit and non-profit organizations for decades on the performance-leverage talented people bring. Peter Drucker explains in *The Essential Drucker*, “Of all the decisions an executive makes, none is as important as the decisions about people because they determine the performance capacity of the organization.” And in *Managing the Nonprofit Organization* he writes, “People decisions are the ultimate – perhaps the only – control of an organization. People determine the performance capacity of an organization. No organization can do better than the people it has…”

In the past decade Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great* and also *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, echoes this same truth. He writes in the latter,

> The great companies, in contrast, focused on getting and hanging on to the right people in the first place—those who are productively neurotic, those who are self-motivated and self-disciplined, those who wake up every day, compulsively driven to do the best they can because it is simply part of their DNA. In the social sectors, when big incentives (or compensation at all, in the case of volunteers) are simply not possible, the First Who principle becomes even more important. Lack of resources is no excuse for lack of rigor—it makes selectivity all the more vital.

Hiring well in any organization means finding the best of the right kind of talent and bringing it on-board. Collins quips in *Good to Great*, “The old adage ‘People are your most important asset’ turns out to be wrong. People are *not* your most important asset. The *right* people are.” The organization that continually desires to better its performance must stop trying to just fill jobs and begin to strategically and intentionally seek to hire

---


the right people. Collin’s “First Who” principle is indeed more important than first deciding what or where. People before vision.

Recent research has also borne out the impact bringing more “right” talent on-board makes. Collin’s findings, expressed above, point out that having the right kind of people “on the bus” differentiates a good organization from a great one. Brad Smart, author of Topgrading, expresses his version of talent leverage this way, “Topgrading is simply defined as achieving teams of almost all A players: those in the top 10 percent of talent available for the pay.” His research of large, midsized and small companies as well as the not-for-profit American Heart Association (all organizations who have topgraded) show dramatic improvement after recruiting better talent. And the authors of The War for Talent note,

The companies that scored in the top quintile of our talent management index earned, on average, twenty-two percentage points higher return to shareholders than their industry peers. The companies that scored in the bottom quintile earned no more than their peers. Certainly, many factors other than talent management are driving returns to shareholders, but these data provide compelling evidence that better talent management results in better performance.

According to expert opinion and research, virtually nothing should matter more to any for-profit or non-profit organization than recruiting the best of the right kind of talent they can find and afford for any open role. Recruiting the best talent available and affordable will make the biggest impact on performance. Yet desiring a thing and doing a thing are clearly two different things.

60 Collins, Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great, 15.


62 Ibid., 125-6.

Hiring the Best Talent Requires Conviction

Michaels expresses that desire alone is insufficient to bring about real change, “It’s not that companies aren’t aware there is a war for talent: 72 percent of respondents strongly agreed it is critical their companies win the war for talent. However, companies haven’t yet taken sufficient action: Only 9 percent are confident that the actions they are taking will lead to a stronger talent pool.”64 The prevalence of information available in the literature suggests this statistic is not due to ignorance, but to something else. The fact that these companies have not taken confident, decisive action actually belies their lack of commitment to the underlying philosophy that virtually nothing matters more than recruiting the right people. For such “slow learner” organizations, hiring well is desirable but still negotiable.

This lack of commitment also comes with a huge price tag. Brad Smart has concluded after 52 Topgrading case studies that the cost of a mis-hire today is between three and fifteen times the recruit’s annual salary.65 For example, saying a candidate’s annual salary is $50,000 per year, then at the very least the cost to the hiring organization will be $150,00 for a severance package, a new search to be conducted and a new hire to be brought in. The cost jumps to $750,000 if the potential revenue of lost business opportunities during the time the position lies vacant are factored in. This figure does not account for “intangible” costs either, like the emotional toll on the recruit, his family, and his former co-workers or the cost of these co-workers lost productivity as they process the dismissal.

Unfortunately a desire to hire well does not get the job done; nor does calculating the staggering financial and emotional price tag for mis-hiring. Michaels and

64 Ibid., 9.

65 Smart, Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People, 46.
his team, however, believe they have pinpointed the Achilles’ heel. Their conclusion isolates the greatest weak spot – not in the steps of the hiring process – but in the lack of courage and conviction on the part of a hiring executive for getting the people part right. They explain, “We wanted to show leaders that great talent management is not about formal HR processes, but about their own beliefs, convictions and actions….We wanted to show them that with courage and conviction they can strengthen their talent pools and thereby achieve substantial performance improvements.” It turns out that recruiting and placing the right person with the right gifts and talents in the right place begins with vision. It is rooted in an organization’s or a hiring executive’s conviction to do whatever it takes to consistently get the people part of his department or organization right.

Executives make time for what they believe is important and for what they believe will make a difference. According to the literature, a hiring executive’s conviction that the right talent is out there and nothing matters more to his organization than recruiting him or her is the determinative factor for hiring well. Without this talent conviction, even the best hiring process will degenerate into thoughtless, mechanical activity. Getting the right talent on-board is critical for any organization’s future and it is the internal conviction that says doing less simply makes no sense.

**Conviction Should Lead to Decisive Action**

Those who share a conviction for continuously improving their organization’s performance by hiring the best of the right kind of talent available and affordable, in fact, share a new vision for hiring itself. They no longer see hiring as a way to just fill a job, but see it as a strategy for growing the capacity and capability of the organization as a whole. And this vision insists on replacing fruitless and ineffective hiring actions with those that will bring powerful, lasting change instead. It is a talent vision. And one or

---

more “best actions” may flow out of this vision into an organization’s practices for continously raising its talent bar.

The first best action is to continuously evaluate the breadth and depth of the existing talent pool. This is the logical implication of Collin’s “First Who” principle from *Good to Great*. No organization should disconnect a new or strategic “what” from the equally strategic “who” charged with implementing it. If the senior leadership identifies a gap in the existing talent workforce required to achieve a certain new or strategic goal, then leadership must address the First Who issue first or at least concurrently. However, filling the now obvious gap is made more difficult because many organizations are unaware of the talent they already have. To identify what talent was where in the organization Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, implemented an A, B, C grading system for all employees, where “A” means they live the values and make the numbers; “B’s” live the values but do not always make the numbers; and “C’s” who do not live the values, but may make the numbers. His team then assigned “grades” at an annual Session C meeting where all managers were evaluated against pre-determined criteria for promotion, development assignments or targeted for dismissal. However, regardless of the social “software” used to assess a staff member’s talent level and if and how it can be grown, regularly evaluating an organization’s talent pool to broaden and deepen it would continuously increase its capacity and its capability.

The second best action is putting the appropriate “hardware” of internal processes in place to safeguard the talent vision. Hiring must no longer be permitted to be

---

67 Collins, *Good to Great*, 41.


70 Ibid., 109.
done on impulse to meet an immediate or felt need. As Lou Adler writes in *Hire With Your Head*,

A few years ago, the CEO of a fast-growing marketing company cornered me before I was to speak at his trade group breakfast seminar. He had an interview with a vice presidential candidate the next day and wanted a few quick tips on hiring. In response, I gave him the most important secret of hiring success. I told him not to make a hiring decision in the first 30 minutes of the interview. More hiring mistakes are made in the first half-hour of an interview than at any other time. I told him that if he could delay his decisions, favorable or unfavorable, he would eliminate 50 percent of his hiring mistakes.\(^71\)

Hiring must become a part of a thoughtful team-building process. Raising an organization’s talent bar means defining both the job and the talent needed to do a superior job *before* any candidate is contacted. Being rigorous about “gate keeping” is part of the conviction and can be facilitated by an organization’s policies and procedures. With a written hiring policy, embraced and reinforced by the leader’s own actions, impulsive hiring decisions ought to increasingly become the exception rather than the rule.\(^72\) And on the positive side, policies and procedures can become part of the way an organization reminds itself of its vision to hire the best of the right kind of talent and do it every time.

The third best action that may flow from the talent vision is that from now on, every executive does his own hiring. Brad Smart expresses this responsibility, “The CEO['s] job is to achieve results by getting the strategy, talent, and organization culture right.”\(^73\) It is the senior leader’s responsibility to model hiring and to direct and lead the cultural change within the organization required for his subordinates to do the same. It must be a modeled from the top down. Larry Bossidy, former Chairman of AlliedSignal, former Chairman of AlliedSignal, former Chairman of AlliedSignal, former Chairman of AlliedSignal, former Chairman of AlliedSignal,

---

\(^71\) Adler, *Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams*, 18.


\(^73\) Smart, *Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People*, 64.
believes hiring well is the job no executive can delegate. He expresses his own former commitment to the process and experience for hiring in *Execution*,

If you look at any business that’s consistently successful, you’ll find that its leaders focus intensely and relentlessly on people selection…. [This] level of excellence [of talented people at AlliedSignal] didn’t happen by accident. I had devoted what some people considered an inordinate amount of time and emotional energy to hiring, providing the right experiences for, and developing leaders—between 30 and 40 percent of my day for the first two years and a good 20 percent later.”

He concludes his thoughts with a piercing observation on the traditionally-held perspective on hiring – having to do with why so often the right people are not in the right roles. He says, “The leaders aren’t personally committed to the people process and deeply engaged in it.” By inference if the leader abdicates his involvement, hiring well is no longer an intentional, strategic process but left instead to a happy coincidence. Every hiring executive must take personal responsibility for selecting the most talented direct reports available, roll up his sleeves and get deeply involved in the process. This best action is probably one clear mark that an organization has embraced a talent vision.

The fourth and final best action is that an organization adheres to the principle that it is better to keep a position open than to hire “nearly” right. The authors of *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage* speak for others as they write,

In the spate of books about Bill Gates and the corporate juggernaut he built, none fails to mention the role of recruiting in the company’s rise to preeminence. In *The Microsoft Way: The Real Story of How the Company Outsmarts Its Competition*, for example, author Randall E. Stross claims that Microsoft ‘has pursued the best more successfully than other companies, and has visibly reaped the rewards more dramatically than others, too.’ A key component of the Microsoft recruiting strategy is preferring an open slot to a ‘near fit.’ Stross quotes Gates from a company video on hiring: ‘If you have somebody who’s mediocre…we’re really in big trouble,’ because the less-than-ideal employee is hard to dismiss. ‘Thus,’ Stross concludes, ‘Gates admonished his recruiters not to


75 Ibid., 113.
settle for second best or a near fit, even if a continuing vacancy creates a hardship.\textsuperscript{76}

A deeply-held conviction will be necessary to stand up the pressure to fill a role in order to re-balance an out-of-balance workload. Courage will be needed to stand firm when the water cooler talk is swirling with “impossible standards” or “finicky” or “too picky.” Courage knows it will take longer to hire well than it will to just fill the job. Conviction knows that hiring the right person with the right gifts and talents for the right position is too important to give less than the best that can be done. And it would rather see a spot empty than to know it had been responsible for asking “almost” to perform at a level he cannot achieve. And deal with the consequences later.

The squeeze from increased global competition has caused marketplace organizations to face and take responsibility for their lack of courage and conviction to hire the best of the right kind of talent. What about the church? Has it embraced hiring talent as one of the most important parts of achieving its unique vision? Is it really willing to devote the quality time and resources needed to hire God’s “right fit” for every open pastoral position every time? Does the church truly have a talent conviction?

\textit{In The Church}

If the word “talent” does not communicate within the church, but instead it was to use the acronym S.H.A.P.E.\textsuperscript{77} or similar, there can be almost immediate agreement biblically and conceptually that all Christians are not given the same gifts and talents. Scripture clearly teaches (Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 4; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12) that some Christians have been divinely designed for one role, but not for all roles. In the marketplace, \textit{talent} matters. And finding the best of the right kind of talent available and

\textsuperscript{76} Editor, \textit{Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage}, The Results-Driven Manager Series, ed. Harvard Business School (Boston: Harvard Business School, 2006), 67.

affordable is the focus of their recruiting searches. Likewise in the church, divine design matters. The church also needs to hire the best of the right kind of S.H.A.P.E available and affordable. From its own literature, no less than the marketplace does the church want to find and put the right person with the right gifts and talents in the right place, and do it virtually every time.

**Hiring the Best S.H.A.P.E. Makes the Biggest Difference**

In the marketplace the term *talent* describes the holistic sum of a person’s natural gifts, skills, behaviors, talents, character, experiences, judgments and drives. In the church, the concept of “S.H.A.P.E.” seems to be close to a valid analog. It is a concept conceived by Rick Warren of Saddleback Community Church more than twenty years ago that he uses to describe the holistic sum of any Christian’s being: his Spiritual gifts, his H*earth* or passion, his in-born and learned A*bilities*, his P*ersonality* and his life E*xperiences.78


> This verse helps us understand that if we want to discover our mission or purpose in life, we first need to look at the masterpiece God has made us to be. While self-help books tell you to *look within*, I’m saying the key to living the life you were meant to live is to *look to God* and ask him to help you discover your uniqueness. Once you discover who you are, then you can start figuring out what God has planned for your, the specific way he designed you to make a difference in the world for him.79

Each Christian has been divinely designed to fulfill a certain role in the body of Christ. Like snowflakes, no two are designed alike. Each Christian is a unique masterpiece molded and shaped by the Master-Artisan. In this concept of S.H.A.P.E. are many, if not

---

78 Ibid., 7.
79 Ibid., 19.
all, of the same elements present in the marketplace’s definition of talent, save one – spiritual gifts.

Regarding the idea of S.H.A.P.E. as a tool for determining suitability for a ministry role, or defining a match between a Christian and a position, Erik Rees writes, “Too often, I see people carrying heavy loads of frustration because they are trying to serve in areas for which they have little or no ability. On the other hand, the most fulfilled and effective people I see are functioning in areas that precisely match the gifts God has given them.”80 In the church it is just as important to get the right pastor with the right gifts and talents in the right seat as it is for any company in the marketplace to put the person with the right talent for a role in the right seat. An obvious implication for hiring pastors from Rees’ observation is that a pastor S.H.A.P.E.’d for his role ought to experience not only a greater level of efficiency and Kingdom productivity but a deeper sense of dependence, gratitude and fulfillment to God for the opportunity to serve in such a capacity.81 Hiring the best S.H.A.P.E. for any open role in a church should make the biggest difference, as long as Character, Calling and Compatibility remain high.

**Hiring the Best S.H.A.P.E. Requires Conviction**

Though far less prevalent than in the marketplace writings, the church’s counsel on hiring also seems to speak of a conviction that nothing matters quite as much as putting the right pastor in the right place. Harold Westing in the *Church Staff Handbook* suggests that a “right fit” pastor should at least maintain, if not raise, the quality of the staff,

This chapter [on conducting an interview] is based on the presupposition that you want to hire the most capable person possible for your staff position. Small

80 Ibid., 32.

81 However, Kingdom productivity and growth may not always be the Lord’s will for every gifted pastor called to a local church as the example of the prophet Jeremiah may illustrate.
congregations think that they cannot afford a highly qualified person. After all, they are just a small church. However, if you have only two people on the staff, and one of them is a mediocre leader, then 50 percent of your staff is inferior.”

Gary McIntosh in *Staff Your Church for Growth* notes that it is the talent of the staff – having right pastors in right places – that determines whether or not a church succeeds,

Because of the complex needs of the church, hiring the right person has never been more crucial than in the twenty-first century. “When you’re in a start-up,” claims Apple Computer’s Steve Jobs, “the first 10 people will determine whether the company succeeds.” We could adapt that insight to say, “When you’re in the church, the pastoral staff will determine whether the church succeeds.” While the senior pastor’s role as translator of the big picture and caster of the corporate vision is vital, he is only as good as his staff.

And Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont write in *When Moses Meets Aaron*, “Clearly the task of identifying the right staff members to serve on a staff team is one of the most critical decisions a congregation must make.” Embracing the heart-felt conviction that nothing matters more than putting the right pastor with the right gifts and talents in the right place is not limited to the business world; it is a vision also embraced by the church.

Bill Hybels, Senior Pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, is perhaps slightly more outspoken regarding his conviction for hiring well. He embraces a slightly less aggressive but equally rigorous version of *Topgrading* or Jack Welch’s A, B, C grading system. Hybels writes in a recent book, *Axiom*,

One day it dawned on me that my objective as a senior leader needed to be not only taking responsibility to increase my own level of effectiveness so that I stood firmly in the eight, nine, or ten range [of leadership], but also surrounding myself with people who were as close to my level as possible. Because collectively, while we would be able to attract people who were equal to or lower than we were on the leadership-effectiveness scale, we’d never really recruit and retain those above us. Still today I constantly challenge my team to do their very best to raise their level of training and reading all they can read.

---

82 Westing, *Church Staff Handbook: How to Build an Effective Ministry Team*, 177.

83 McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century*, 51.

Train and embolden your staff members to grow their own leadership and then shoot high when someone needs to be added to the team. Encourage them to go after the brightest, most accomplished, most effective leaders they can find. In so doing, you will continually upgrade your organization’s leadership capability.\textsuperscript{85}

From its own literature, the church seems no less desirous, dedicated or determined than the marketplace to recruit and hire the best pastor it can find, the one with the right gifts and talents, the one with the right divine design or S.H.A.P.E. for its open positions. The church does share a talent conviction. But does the literature also suggest that the church has embraced one or more of the “best actions” flowing from such a vision? Indeed it does.

\textbf{Conviction Should Lead to Decisive Action}

Four “best actions” expressed the talent conviction to hire the best of the right kind of talent in the marketplace literature. With one notable addition, the church seems to share at least the spirit, if not the letter, of the same best actions reviewed above. And one or more of these may be found in a church that embraces a talent conviction.

The first best action is to continuously evaluate the breadth and depth of the existing pastoral talent pool. No church can successfully disconnect its vision or its goals from the staff that will resourcefully and creatively implement them. For a church’s vision to become actual rather than aspirational it must have the right pastors with the right gifts and talents in the right roles. Rendle and Beaumont advise church search committees or hiring executives to lead wisely in this area as they express Collin’s “first who…then what” principle in their own words, “We might expect that great leaders would be distinguished from other types of leaders by their ability to cast vision and define strategy. What Collins found instead is that great leaders always began with getting the right people onto the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in

\textsuperscript{85} Hybels, \textit{Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs}, 12.
the right seats – and then they figured out where to drive the bus.”

Clearly, hiring well improves both the capacity and the capability of any local church. No local church should be hiring a vision; it should instead concentrate on hiring a known S.H.A.P.E. for a well-defined role.

And as has been seen through Bill Hybels’ leadership at Willow Creek, every local church would benefit from identifying what strengths each of its pastor’s S.H.A.P.E. brings to the table. Developing a regular, objective and annual review of this Providential collection of divine designs would likely help senior church leadership have some additional level of insight into God’s direction for their church as well as identify key S.H.A.P.E. gaps in the current pastoral staff. Perhaps in this scenario an A might represent clearly having the pastoral strengths necessary to pursue a new initiative, while a B represents the need to supplement the existing pastoral talent in a certain area, etc. Other churches may choose instead to rate their pastoral staff in comparison to an “ideal” pastoral standard and therefore assign a number or letter “grade” to each. In either case such review “software” could be done in preparation for or in conjunction with an annual performance review to embed it as part of the church’s culture.

The second best action is putting the appropriate “hardware” of internal processes in place to safeguard the talent vision. In many local churches policies and procedures are disparaged and ignored. However, putting policy and procedure “speed bumps” in the road to slow the hiring process down ideally eliminates or at least substantially minimizes the temptation to hire impulsively. While policies and procedures may not be absolutely necessary to achieve the desired end, they may help. Gary

---

McIntosh, following the advice of Peter Drucker, recommends hiring slowly and methodically and following a well-defined and rigorous process.87

Westing warns the church against taking short cuts in the hiring process, “We have all met charming personalities who were hired because they seemed to be such wonderful people. They have so many wonderful stories to tell of their effective ministries in other cities and churches. [Yet] No one bothered to check their references. This is always a major mistake.”88 And Rendle and Beaumont note, “Hiring decisions made in haste almost always come back to haunt the congregation, either because the candidate wasn’t really a good match to begin with or because the incoming candidate wasn’t provided with clear expectations.”89 (74) A local church who embraces the vision that hiring well matters must at the very least have a universally understood, accepted and practiced internal DNA to eliminate hiring short cuts. Perhaps implementing policies and procedures that, if necessary, force it to eliminate hiring impulsively would help. More often than not, hiring in haste brings heartache.

The third best action is that from now on, every decision-making pastor does his own hiring. In the marketplace, the literature recommends that the CEO personally express his conviction that hiring well matters by doing his own hiring. In the church, this means executive-level pastoral staff should do their own hiring. If they sincerely embrace the conviction that nothing matters more to the long-term health, vitality and performance of their local church than having the right people on staff, they will not delegate hiring their direct reports to others. In fact, to them it is a privilege rather than a burden to

87 McIntosh, Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century, 55-7.
88 Westing, Church Staff Handbook: How to Build an Effective Ministry Team, 159.
89 Rendle and Beaumont, When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations, 74.
enhance their organizational family. It is a modeling function for the rest of the staff they cannot ignore.

Hybels writes about his hands-on involvement in the hiring process, “So during the selection process I work very hard to discern a candidate’s character. I check references. I speak at length with people who know the person well. I’m looking for any red flags pursuant to issues of character. Better for me to catch inconsistencies now than force a whole team to catch them later.”\textsuperscript{90} Contrary to best action, Westing believes it would be “folly” for the lead pastor to take the full responsibility for adding team members, but does concur that the lead pastor should nevertheless play the key role in the selection of his staff.\textsuperscript{91} While an executive-level pastor may require help in the hiring process he must guard against abdicating the responsibility to others.

The fourth best action would be to adhere to the principle that it is better to keep a position open than to hire “nearly” right. In his advice to the church, McIntosh writes, “Finally, determine to hold to your expectations no matter how desperate you feel. It’s best to keep looking until you find a candidate who comes close to the profile you’ve written. If you lower your expectations too much, you will probably regret it later. Never compare multiple candidates against each other. That is why you have a shopping list [a requirements target]. Measure each candidate against the list.”\textsuperscript{92} Keep looking if the candidates reviewed do not at least maintain, but better raise, the overall talent level of the church staff. Do not settle for “almost.”

A fifth best action, of course, is found exclusively in the church literature. Bathe the entire need in constant prayer. This is an obvious and non-negotiable best action consistent with the church’s sacred conviction to recruit God’s man into a pastoral

\textsuperscript{90} Hybels, \textit{Courageous Leadership}, 82-3.

\textsuperscript{91} Westing, \textit{Church Staff Handbook: How to Build an Effective Ministry Team}, 34-5.

\textsuperscript{92} McIntosh, \textit{Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century}, 57.
position. Surprisingly, however, not every church author even mentioned it. Rendle and Beaumont well express both the underlying conviction and this best action as they write,

The entire hiring process needs to be a prayer-centered experience. Those whom you select to participate in an interviewing process need to be people of spiritual maturity and wisdom, with some openness to the notion that God may have something to say about your employment choices. So as you or others design a recruiting process, be intentional about the spiritual dimension of the tasks that lie ahead of you.93

Prayer must be the beginning point, the fuel to execute a discerning search and the concluding grateful expression of thanksgiving to God for his new pastor as he makes the transition into his new church family. Prayer demonstrates dependence on the Lord and expresses the desire to see God’s choice fill God’s role in his church.

**Summary Regarding Best Practices for Resolution 1**

Expert opinions and research in the marketplace agree – repeatedly hiring the best of the right kind of talent available and affordable for every role is the single greatest source of performance-enhancement any organization can realize. Better talent makes the biggest difference. As Peter Drucker noted regarding non-profits in general, “No organization can do better than the people it has…”94 The single greatest factor for any organization to begin with for this enhancement process is for its hiring executives to face their own lack of courage and conviction to get the people part right. Without this conviction and courage even the best-run hiring process will quickly degenerate into a series of thoughtless mechanical steps and activities. Instead, every hiring executive must see himself or herself as a full-time talent scout.

Both the marketplace and the church seem to share this talent conviction, though their definitions of talent and their goals are certainly different. Both also suggest

---


using at least one or more of the four best actions flowing from a talent conviction: (1) to continuously evaluate the breadth and depth of the current talent pool; (2) to use appropriate policies and procedures in place to guard this conviction; (3) to insist that executive-level leadership do their own hiring; and (4) to hire rightly or leave the position open. The church goes on to add a fifth, essential, unique and non-negotiable best action to its list, namely prayer.

**Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 2**

Every hiring process has a target in mind. And the traditional hiring process has leaned heavily on the classic job description to define this target. Sometimes this description is overly ideal; at other times it is woefully out of date. Nonetheless, the job description usually directs those who are hiring to the appropriate candidate pools and eventually determines which “match” will eventually be selected.

In 2006 Janet Boydell in *You’re Not the Person I Hired!* concluded a fifteen year study of more than 20,000 hiring executives to pinpoint the top ten most commonly repeated mistakes made in executive hiring. She found that common job descriptions, ones that communicated desired education, experience, traits and skills but not company expectations was the number one cause of executive failure after two years in 93% of the cases. Her conclusion, “In nearly every situation, when new executives and managers failed to meet expectations, a major causal factor was that expectations had not been clearly defined [by the job description] in the first place.”

What the traditional job description fails to provide is a definition of “success” for the new hire.

DeAnne Rosenberg in *Hiring the Best Person for Every Job* compares and contrasts the traditional job description with what is called by some a success profile, “A

---

job description lists tasks and activities. It is not a sufficient foundation on which to base an interview. You should also have a statement of job objectives: a statement of the achievements, outputs, and results to be expected from the person hired into the position. Lou Adler adds, “Hiring great people is about defining the desired results, and then finding people with the ability and desire to deliver these results. It’s not about listing skills and qualifications.” What is required today is a more holistic definition of what it means to be successful with an organization, describing what is expected, how the candidate needs to behave and the marrow of the team’s culture. What is needed is a success profile. Appendix B presents an example of both a traditional job description and a success profile for the same opening to illustrate some of the difference. Unfortunately, any local church still relying on a traditional job description to identify their next “right fit” pastor is mistaken.

In the Marketplace

The success profile is fast becoming a necessary supplement to the traditional job description in the marketplace. While there is no universal definition or agreement on its format, there are certain common elements. First, there is a statement of the position’s purpose or mission. Second, the position’s expected 12-month outcomes are clearly spelled out. And finally, the desired behavioral and skill competencies are described. Such a well-crafted success profile clearly defines what a great fit looks like one year into the future.

---


97 Adler, Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams, 35.
Define the Position’s Mission

A success profile begins with either a position summary or a mission statement. Adler uses a position summary as a short-hand way of capturing the role and responsibilities aspects of a more traditional job description. Smart and Street prefer a mission statement. They write, “The mission statement is an executive summary of the job’s core purpose.” And it should be written in plain, everyday language to minimize miscommunication and maximize clarity. Whether it is articulated in terms of purpose or mission the function of the statement is to bring a laser beam focus to the essence of the job, stating it in a way everyone understands – the long-timer and the new hire alike.

Such a clear and succinct mission statement helps ensure an organization’s workload is distributed with maximum efficiency. It engenders teamwork because roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined. It also minimizes the confusion that can result from role overlap or role “gaps” that allow work to fall through the cracks.

Define the Expected 12-Month Outcomes

A success profile lists the very specific and measurable outcomes an organization expects to be delivered in the next 12 months. And delivering these outcomes means “success” for the new hire. The literature recommends anywhere from three to nine key outcomes, depending on the outcome’s strategic value and complexity, with six being the median. Boydell rightly insists that these outcomes be “trickled down” from the strategic level to the level of the individual. This linkage ensures that everyone

98 Ibid., 53.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., 22-7.
in the organizational boat is rowing in the same direction.\textsuperscript{102} Adler expands on the reason for such clear definition, “When completed, a performance profile [his name for a success profile] describes the results needed to be successful, the key process steps needed to achieve these results, and an understanding of the environment (e.g. pace, resources, professionalism, decision making, culture).”\textsuperscript{103}

Putting expectations in black-and-white is beneficial for several reasons. First, it provides clarity. The success profile defines up-front what the organization expects will be delivered one year from now; the traditional job description does not. When done rightly this minimizes the margin for misunderstanding between the new hire and the organization. Second, such outcomes identify who the “right” person for the job really is. As Adler cogently notes, the right person for an organization’s open position is the person who can deliver the results rather than another person who may have all the skills and experiences listed on a traditional job description.\textsuperscript{104}

Third, a success profile gives the new hire a real sense of accomplishment. Patrick Lencioni writes in \textit{The Three Signs of a Miserable Job} that “immeasurement” [his word] or lack of measurement regarding performance objectives is one of the three greatest frustrations an employee experiences. He writes, “Employees need to be able to gauge their progress and level of contribution for themselves….Without a tangible means for assessing success or failure, motivation eventually deteriorates as people see themselves as unable to control their own fate.”\textsuperscript{105} Peter Drucker agrees, “Knowledge work is not defined by quantity. Neither is knowledge work defined by its costs.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Boydell, Deutsch, and Remillard, \textit{You're Not the Person I Hired!: A CEO's Survival Guide to Hiring Top Talent}, 60.
  \item \textsuperscript{103} Adler, \textit{Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams}, 37.
  \item \textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 32.
  \item \textsuperscript{105} Patrick Lencioni, \textit{The Three Signs of a Miserable Job: A Fable for Managers (and Their Employees)} (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 222.
\end{itemize}
Knowledge work is defined by its results.”106 A success profile that defines an organization’s expectations and outcomes is critical to both the organization’s performance and the new hire’s sense of accomplishment and well-being.

**Define the Desired Competencies**

People are complex. They are not machines who deliver outcomes, but human beings with likes, dislikes, preferences and tendencies. Every candidate is valuable as a human being not just for the work he delivers. Yet the literature is clear that the “right” hire will deliver the outcomes with “just like one of us” behaviors or runs a high risk of being rejected by the organization’s cultural antibodies. In other words, he must be a great “fit.” Research consistently shows that those who do fit report higher levels of job satisfaction.107

These more intangible, but nonetheless real, skills, traits, behaviors, preferences and morals are grouped in the literature under the term “competencies.” They define how a candidate will go about his job.108 Whether the traits are in-born or learned, competencies define the manner in which a staff member works toward the outcomes. Competency recognizes that all ways of delivering results are not equal, for each organization has its own “right” way of doing things. Authors describe various categories of a candidate’s overall competence that must match fairly well with an organization’s culture.109 However, focusing on the intersection of these overlapping competencies – the


109 For example, Klinvex identifies four categories of competency: knowledge, skills and abilities, motivations and other (p. 5). Irwin differentiates between authentic character and exceptional competence at work by which he means, for example, self-management, forethought, dependability, and the ability to learn (p. 184). Adler distinguishes between assessing character and values and measuring
“soft characteristics” fit – comprises a critical dimension for defining who will be the “right fit” person for an open position. While admittedly somewhat arbitrary, it nonetheless seems reasonable to join some of the categories of competency from the literature together into three clusters: competencies of training and experience; competencies of behavioral fit; and competencies of organizational fit.

**Competencies of Training and Experience**

One easily recognized and traditional category of competency compares a candidate’s education, acquired skills and work experiences with the organization’s perception of how critical those competencies are to delivering the desired outcomes. Interestingly, DeAnne Rosenberg in *Hiring the Best Person for Every Job* devotes only three slightly disparaging pages to these items. She notes under one section’s heading “Apparent Relevance of Experience” that “Length of time on a particular job may be meaningless; you must look further than dates to assess the validity of what appears on the surface to be an important consideration.” She continues that many times a candidate has only accumulated one year’s worth of experience, but has repeated it four, five or six times in a row during their tenure. Under another section entitled “Apparent Relevance of Education” she notes, “By tracking the success rates of their recent hires, many companies have discovered that the achievements on the job of these exceptional candidates [Ivy League graduates in this case] were no better or worse than those of other less exceptionally equipped candidates.”

---

notes:

110 Editor, *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage*. See for instance pages 65-73, especially page 68.


112 Ibid., 34.
Research seems to bear out neither education nor experience are reliable predictors of future performance. Hunter and Hunter found in their article “Validity and Utility of Alternative Predictors of Job Performance” that experience ranked fifth while education ranked ninth in predicting future job performance.\(^\text{113}\) The coefficients of mean validity (.18 and .10 respectively) indicate little, if any, correlation with predicting future job performance according to experts.\(^\text{114}\) Dakin and Armstrong in another article “Predicting Job Performance: A Comparison of Expert Opinion and Research Findings” even noted their surprise at the low correlation between education and future performance.\(^\text{115}\) But perhaps a more troubling finding from their research is that hiring executives continue to make hiring decisions based on their perception of the validity, for example about the value of education or experience, or their own personal beliefs, rather than the facts of research.\(^\text{116}\) Unfortunately, this faulty perception clouds the lens through which a hiring executive views the candidates, perhaps causing him to pass over some who are otherwise well-qualified.

**Competencies of Behavioral Fit**

Behavioral fit describe the cluster of behaviors and traits desired for doing a job exceptionally well. Simply put, the marketplace has recognized that people see and value things differently, not wrongly. Jorgen Sandberg notes in his article “Understanding Competence at Work” that “…competent workers have a particular


\(^{114}\) Klinvex, O’Connell, and Klinvex, *Hiring Great People*, 142.


\(^{116}\) Ibid.: 3.
vision of what their work is and why it is that way.” And so finding a fit is crucial to both parties. Tim Irwin in *Run with the Bulls without Getting Trampled* identifies such things living out disciplined self-management, demonstrating forethought, dependability, resourcefulness and showing an on-going desire to learn and an ability to change as desirable candidate behavioral competencies. Jennings and Haughton in *It's Not the Big that Eat the Small...It's the Fast that Eat the Slow* identify the one behavior they want to see in a new hire more than any other as “proven initiative.” Smart and Street list such things as flexibility and adaptability, calm under pressure, listening skills and openness to criticism and ideas. And Robert Kiyosaki recommends in his brief article “The Key to Hiring Right” that an organization should hire only those people who share its vision. Of course, these are just examples. The literature is ripe with different “right” lists of behaviors.

But behavioral competencies also encompass traditionally moralistic behaviors. Irwin lists trustworthiness, persistence and avoidance of derailment factors. Herb Baum identifies integrity as key in *The Transparent Leader*, “Integrity and its connection to successful leadership is a hot issue in the business world, and will continue to be now that corporations and executives have become aware of the dangers of deceptive business practices…after all is said and done, your integrity will be

---


122 Irwin, *Run with the Bulls without Getting Trampled*, 184.
remembered, regardless of what you achieve.”123 Regarding the non-negotiable nature of character in any hire, Peter Drucker in *Managing the Nonprofit Organization* writes about the best question he ever heard, “I always ask myself, would I want one of my sons to work under that person? If he is successful, then young people will imitate him. Would I want my son to look like this?”124 And in *A New Breed of Leader* Shelia Murray Bethel identifies humility as the core characteristic of the new leader.125

Putting the right person in the right place improves an organization’s productivity and increases the employee’s sense of personal fulfillment.126 It also seems likely that such a fit might mean a fully-engaged employee will be more likely to stay productive and on a staff longer than one who is not fulfilled.127 The bottom line seems to be this: How a new hire behaves in his role is just as important as the outcomes he delivers.

**Competencies of Organizational Fit**

The literature is united around two facts: virtually every staff member is a part of a larger team and every organization has a unique culture for how these teams accomplish their work. Therefore, how a candidate fits interpersonally cannot be underestimated. The authors of *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage* describe what it means for a candidate to fit into an organization’s culture, “[It] means they need to

---


demonstrate the values your company emphasizes, as well as the attitudes and behaviors (such as friendliness to customers, openness to new ideas, and emotional intelligence) needed to support your company’s competitive strategy.”

Collins and Porras express the uniqueness of these cultures in *Built to Last* as the Wal-Mart way, the Hewlett Packard way, the Nordstrom way or the Disney way, as examples, reinforcing the idea that every organization has its own unique way of doing things that requires a full buy-in from any prospective employee.  

Conversely, if the new hire cannot buy-in 100%, he will undoubtedly in time be ejected from the organization as a virus is attacked and ejected from the human body. Michaels agrees, “Studies have shown that poor cultural fit is a major cause of turnover for new hires.” An organization’s culture is a powerful and unforgiving force. It cannot be taken lightly. It is highly resistant to change. No new employee can swim against the relentless tide of an organization’s culture. He must either fit in from the start or quickly adapt or he will be put out even if his previous accomplishments have been superior. 

Every organization must know itself well and communicate its sense of culture with candidates from the outset. A novel idea is that proposed by Erickson and Gratton in “What It Means to Work Here.” They suggest sharing an organization’s

---

128 Editor, *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage*, 63.


130 Ibid., 89.


132 Ibid. Michaels relates the story of the The Limited’s CEO Les Wexner’s aggressive hiring campaign to improve the company. After bringing in a number of “superstars from inside and outside the retailing industry” Wexner noted that “at first, the new people [the superstars] went straight into their jobs—with little help in getting acclimated to the company. ‘It was like throwing people into the deep end of the pool with a fifty-pound block tied to their leg,’” said one executive. Wexner continued, “Needless to say, a large number of them didn’t assimilate and ended up leaving.” Regardless of past accomplishments any organization’s culture is a real and relentless force that must be worked with rather than against.
signature experience – describing that distinctive practice that best describes what it is really like to work there and how it makes this organization a unique and fulfilling place to work.  

Every organization must come to know itself. Is it innovative and entrepreneurial? Is it analytical? Does it say it is a risk-taking organization but everyone knows that hitting the numbers is immeasurably more important than taking new risks? Does it operate out of silos or is it more collaborative? Does it have laissez-faire management style or is it filled with bureaucratic micro-managers? Does it reward activity or results? Whatever the culture is, it is unique, it is the life-blood of the organization and it is highly resistant to change. Getting the cultural fit right truly is non-negotiable.

**Identifying Competencies in Candidates**

The literature is united on the importance of discovering these types of competencies in a candidate for increasing the probability of making a good fit. The question is how to do it repeatedly and reliably. Here two paths are described in the literature: those authors who advocate using self-administered instruments, such as personality tests; and those authors who advocate using the structured, behavior-based interview process.

Some authors and researchers are advocates of using self-administered instruments to surface key behavioral competencies. The Harvard Business School book *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage* notes the reason to use such tests is simple: “…used properly, psychological tests may predict success on the job better than any other measure.”  

Klinvex in *Hiring Great People* recommends a diversified portfolio of tests

---


134 Editor, *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage*, 75.
as no one test is a perfect predictor of any single competency.\(^{135}\) Even entire books have been written covering the different assessment instruments, including when and how to use them to best advantage.\(^ {136}\) However, even these authors advise that only the properly educated and trained should interpret the results.\(^ {137}\) Further, many on-line personality tests come with “not for employee selection” types of disclaimers.\(^ {138}\)

Other authors and researchers advocate the structured interview process for surfacing these kinds of behavioral competencies. Steven Hunt in *Hiring Success* notes that because most every company uses some form of hiring interview using a structured interview works reasonably well, and is welcomed by the hiring executives because it makes the interview process easier.\(^ {139}\) Most of this brand of researcher adheres to the principle that the best predictor of future performance is past performance\(^ {140}\) and so they seek in the interview to construct a track record, a connect-the-dots, of demonstrated behavioral competence in the past. Smart and Street note that there is great power in “…using data and patterns of behavior for making predictions about how somebody is likely to perform in the future.”\(^ {141}\)

---


137 Editor, *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage*, 79, 81.

138 For example under a section entitled “Ethical Guidelines for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Instrument” are instructions to “Stress that type does not imply excellence, competence, or natural ability, only what is preferred.” [http://www.myersbriggs.org/myers-and-briggs-foundation/ethical-use-of-the-mbti-instrument/ethical-guidelines.asp](http://www.myersbriggs.org/myers-and-briggs-foundation/ethical-use-of-the-mbti-instrument/ethical-guidelines.asp)


After reading nearly a dozen peer-reviewed papers and journals, each one advancing compelling reasons why its side is right, this author acknowledges that such a determination is well beyond either his training or the scope of this paper. But Drucker’s position as stated in *The Essential Drucker*, “We do not know how to test or predict whether a person’s temperament will be suited to a new environment. We can find this out only by experience” is most compelling.\(^\text{142}\) And this simple idea tips the advantage to a series of structured, behavior-based interviews.

Hiring the best of the right kind of talent requires defining what a great fit looks like. It is the target at which the whole hiring process is aimed. Articulating a “right fit” means first defining the purpose or the mission of the open role. Second, it means clearly and measurably defining the expected outcomes for 12 months out. And third, it means describing those key skill and behavioral competencies, without which a great fit cannot be achieved. A more holistic target called a “Success Profile” seems to fulfill this targeting function well.

What does the church literature recommend regarding hiring the right pastor for the right role? Is it still advocating the traditional job description or has it made any adjustments?

*In the Church*

There is no mention of anything like a success profile in the church literature. Yet, the church clearly shares the concept of one by again-and-again noting the need to define the essence of an open role (the mission), to define what needs to be accomplished (the outcomes) and to describe the behaviors and skills for how those outcomes must be accomplished (the competencies). In many ways it seems this is exactly what Paul

\(^{142}\) Drucker, *The Essential Drucker: The Best of Sixty Years of Peter Drucker's Essential Writings on Management*, 133.
outlined for Timothy in the book of 1 Timothy.\textsuperscript{143} Truly, apart from the lack of shared terminology, the church and the marketplace are on the same page when it comes to seeking the “right fit” through such a tool as a success profile. It, better than the traditional job description, seeks to define both role and fit.

**Define the Position’s Mission**

Gary McIntosh writes in *Staff Your Church for Growth*, “Superior motivation occurs when staff members embrace and celebrate a common mission….The first step in using this key to motivate staff members is to define the [church’s] mission….The second step is to communicate how the corporate mission relates directly to the staff member’s ministry area.”\textsuperscript{144} Undoubtedly this can best be accomplished with a role-specific mission statement. In *Courageous Leadership* Bill Hybels writes, “The first step in building a [staff] dream team is to define the purpose of the team. And I mean, define it with ruthless specificity…”\textsuperscript{145} Both of these authors strongly recommend the need for a clear, focused mission statement for each and every role or staff position. Harold Westing, in the *Church Staff Handbook*, reminds his readers of the multiplying effect of everyone rowing in the same direction as he writes of the “…built-in guarantee that God will make you much more productive in his work when all of you put your hands to the common plow.”\textsuperscript{146} As has been noted in the marketplace section above, defining role-specific mission statements brings maximum alignment, teamwork and motivation as well as minimizing confusion from role overlap or gaps which allow work to fall through the cracks.

\textsuperscript{143} Rendle and Beaumont, *When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations*, 61.

\textsuperscript{144} McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century*, 122.

\textsuperscript{145} Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 80.

\textsuperscript{146} Westing, *Church Staff Handbook: How to Build an Effective Ministry Team*, 26.
Define the Expected 12-Month Outcomes

The church literature also recommends defining outcomes not only for each church but for individual staff roles. The authors seem to be in agreement that defining outcomes is not unbiblical. In fact, Jesus gave his disciples an outcome toward which they were to strive in Matthew 28:19-20, “Go, and make disciples.” They do, however, remind their readers that appropriate outcomes must be biblically-based and must exalt Christ rather than church or self (e.g. James 4:13-16). Harold Westing writes pointedly about every local church establishing a criteria for success, a finish line for “winning.”

A social-spiritual system, like an athletic team, plays together to win. The other team members pay the price of giving that extra ounce of energy to make up for the one whose soul huts and who is having some great struggles. The team is determined to win. In the team meetings and review huddles, they continually think through new strategies because they are determined to see the church of Jesus Christ go forward like a mighty army. Every team and every church must come to a conclusion about what is the bottom line. What is winning?  

Setting goals, even biblically-based ambitious goals, is not inappropriate. On the contrary, these authors counsel every local church to search the Scriptures and define what “winning” looks like for their unique context. Andy Stanley, in fact, devotes an entire chapter of his book 7 Practices of Effective Ministry to describe how North Point Church “clarifies the win.”

Then, church-level goals must trickle down to an individual pastor’s level. Rendle and Beaumont in When Moses Meets Aaron write on defining such individualized outcomes,

---

147 Ibid., 84.
An old saying goes ‘If you don’t know where you are going, any path will get you there.’ This suggests that if you are not clear about what you, your staff, and your congregation are to ‘produce’ in ministry, what the clear outcomes of your work are to be, then it is okay for staff members to spend their time on whatever their current practices or preferences of work might be. This leads to assumptions that work – any work – is appropriate whether it is making a needed difference or not.

The dilemma is that typically when staff do not know what they are to produce, or when staff do not know what they are being held accountable to produce, they tend to value and measure their work by the amount of time consumed or the number of tasks accomplished….When a system does not know what to do, it does what it knows.150

The danger of not defining outcomes is that a church might only reward activity instead of results; it might reward effort but not outcomes. Every local church must know what it is striving in the power of the Holy Spirit to produce. In fact, it might not be too great a stretch to suppose that these authors would say that if church leadership does not specify both church and individual-level outcomes it is in danger of being in serious leadership default.

Outcomes cannot be vague. They must be clear, specific and measurable. Rendle and Beaumont write, “Outcomes need to be specific by stating clear differences [that would be achieved] within a specified amount of time. Outcomes go a step beyond saying what we will work on and actually describe what will be different if we are faithful in working on our call to ministry.”151 McIntosh adds that these kinds of specific outcomes are motivational to the staff noting, “At all levels, responsibility motivates. It is important to allow staff to set their own agendas and goals, thereby taking on responsibility. Staff members will only be motivated to help fulfill the corporate mission when each individual’s goals are tied to that mission.”152 Creating these “linked


151 Ibid., 44.

152 McIntosh, Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century, 122.
outcomes” at all levels in all likelihood would be a guided process or a collaborative effort between the senior-level and junior-level staff, but requiring input from those who are charged with implementation definitely heightens ownership.

Each author, in his or her own words, also ultimately advocates a culture of preparing and executing around specific, measurable outcomes. Bill Hybels writes of such a culture in *Courageous Leadership* noting how Willow Creek sets goals and establishes outcomes,

I mentioned earlier that I’m a major advocate of establishing BHAGs – big, hairy, audacious goals. But goals have to be more than big. They also have to be clear. The old saying is true: What gets measured, gets done.

Church leaders must do what Jesus did. We must sit down with teams all across the church and establish clear, challenging, God-honoring goals. Then we need to inspire team members to roll up their sleeves and get creative. We need to challenge them to fast, to pray, to pull together, and to give their best efforts in order to achieve the goals for the glory of the One whose name we bear.153

Clearly, setting outcomes requires prayer and disciplined mental effort. It requires collaboration with those charged with implementation, specificity and – even if qualitatively done – determining ahead of time how each outcome will be measured. Success must be defined. It requires putting outcomes in writing and exercising appropriate accountability to see each one brought to pass. Executing such outcomes is how a church as well as its staff “wins.”

**Define the Desired Competencies**

Competencies define *how* a new hire will go about his job; they define the *manner* in which a pastor works toward his individual as well as the church’s outcomes. The idea of competencies acknowledges that all ways of delivering outcomes are not equal, for each local church has its own “right” way of doing things. This concept is certainly not limited to the marketplace, but is a further recognition of the differences of

153 Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 90.
divine design. Every church must strive to seek the very best fit possible between its own culture and that of potential candidates.

Gary McIntosh writes about seven basic, general principles that should guide any church’s specific hiring process. Of these seven principles, no less than three relate directly to either behavioral or cultural competencies. He writes,

First, understand that talented people gravitate toward satisfying staff experiences. The magnets that attract competent staff are a stimulating work culture, skillful leaders, and core values that match their own. Churches do not always pay the most money, but the intangible things can be just as important, such as flexible schedules, casual dress, educational opportunities, and sabbaticals.

Second, understand that the work environment has become as valuable to potential staff members as benefits and salaries. Persons applying for your new position will undoubtedly ask questions about your church’s corporate culture. They seek working conditions that fit their lifestyles.

Third, understand that the emphasis today should not be on filling positions but on assembling the skills necessary to achieve a strategic mission. A church that fails to hire staff based on its mission, values, and vision will see the danger signs: stressed staff, high turnover, and low quality ministry.  

In any organization, including the church, potential staff members want to fit; they want to be fully caught up in its vision and mission in the world. They want to contribute. They are looking for more than a challenging assignment; they are looking for a sense of passionate engagement. This is the essence of fit and it cannot be ignored.

McIntosh goes on to describe three categories of fit a candidate must share with his team that he learned from Charles Olson “…an effective pastoral staff member should possess a heart of godliness (character), an ability to perform successfully (competence), and a congruous profile (compatibility with the church).” These three categories, it seems, are just another way of expressing the categories of fit reviewed

154 McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century*, 52-3.

155 Ibid., 54.
above from the marketplace, namely competencies of skill and training (competence), personal competencies (character), and interpersonal competencies (cultural compatibility). Not coincidentally, Bill Hybels affirms an almost identical set of three competencies which he calls his Three C’s for team member selection: Character, Competence and Chemistry.¹⁵⁶

By character Hybels means, “...that I need to have confidence in a person’s walk with Jesus Christ. I need to know that they are committed to spiritual disciplines. I need to see evidence of honesty, teachability, humility, reliability and healthy work ethic, and a willingness to be entreated....I look for character that has already been positively formed.”¹⁵⁷ Gene Getz in *Elders and Leaders* affirms the centrality of character for the church leader, “When we read Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus outlining the qualifications for elders/overseers, we’ll see how important it is to select leaders based on character.”¹⁵⁸ For a pastor, nothing matters more than character. Even his S.H.A.P.E. must be considered as secondary to his character.

Hybels continues regarding competence, “…I don’t apologize for shooting high. I look for the highest level of competence I can find. I ask God to help me find someone whose spiritual gifts have been developed and refined over many years.”¹⁵⁹ Thirdly he describes chemistry, as “…a relational fit with me as well as with other team members...[I would] never invite a person onto my team who doesn’t have a positive emotional effect on me the minute he or she walks into my office...So if two job
candidates have equal character and competence, I’ll give the nod to the person whose personality and temperament blends with the other team members and with me.”

Later on Hybels adds a fourth C to his competencies list – call. Describing this possession he writes,

On this matter, I’m from the old school. I really believe that anyone who bears the name of Jesus Christ has a calling, whether they’re a pastor or a layperson. We must all surrender ourselves fully and make ourselves completely available to God. We must all ask, ‘What’s my mission, God? Where do you want me to serve? What role would you have me play in your grand kingdom drama?’

It is a great privilege and blessing to receive a call from the holy God. Our life becomes focused. We have increased energy and greater confidence. And knowing that we’re on a mission that matters adds purpose and meaning to every day. But we can only enjoy these benefits if we keep our calling sure.

In Hybel’s opinion every Christian has a calling on his life. No less should the right pastor for the right role have a sense that he also has the right call from God on his life for that role. This should be an expectation every local church has when seeking a “right fit” pastor.

In summary, these four C’s: Character, Competence, Compatibility and Calling seem to reflect the same intentionality found in the marketplace for surfacing a candidate’s beliefs, behaviors, values, traits, preferences relational skills. Without a great match between a local church and the candidates they evaluate on these intangible issues, there can be no great fit.

**Summary Regarding Best Practices for Resolution 2**

Making a great hire requires defining a great fit between the organization or the church and the candidates it evaluates. As has been seen, the traditional job description is an inadequate tool for defining a great fit. What is needed is a more holistic

---

160 Ibid., 84-5.

161 Ibid., 186.
definition of what it means to successfully fit into an existing organization: (1) describing the mission of the position; (2) defining what is expected in 12 months regarding measurable outcomes; and (3) outlining how the candidate must behave in order to be “one of us.” The term “success profile” seems to encompass these ideas well.

**Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 3**

A local church has invested quality time and energy to define its target for “right” by creating a success profile. And as a person charged with hiring well the decision-maker has a heart-felt conviction that “right” is out there and nothing matters more than bringing him onto the team. But hiring the right person for the right place becomes impossibly hard if one can’t find any “right” candidates. This is the issue called sourcing and encompasses how and where to find those kinds of candidates that can realistically hit the target a church has created. Simply broadcasting the availability of an open position over the Internet or evaluating only the aggressive or available candidates who seek out the church perhaps misses a whole group of well-qualified people altogether. These so-called passive candidates may, in fact, be the very kind of people a church is trying to recruit.

Such is the state of affairs in the church today, as a quote in the Introduction from *Christianity Today* indicated. Unfortunately, this emphasis might easily become too much of a business practice brought into the church. It seems from the earlier study of the Scriptures that this best practice is not taught. But because of its current prevalence within the church it is necessary to review what the marketplace and church literature are saying about it and to determine what, if anything, from this discussion can legitimately be incorporated into a biblical hiring process.
In the Marketplace

The marketplace literature is in agreement that traditional sourcing strategies no longer work for finding the best of the right kind of talent for your open position. Smart and Street present a tongue-in-cheek scenario of the traditional search process,

A vacancy opens up in a manager’s division, and the manager panics. He has no idea how he is going to fill the spot, so he calls HR and begs for help. HR asks him for a job description, which he copies from an old one he finds and submits to the HR team to post.

Predictably, three months go by without much traction until, getting desperate, the manager pushes the HR team to source more people. Finally, HR presents a few candidates to the manager, and since nobody in the firm knows anything about these people, they subject the candidates to multiple forms of voodoo hiring methods with the hope of making a good decision. Months later, the manager fills the position with one of these unknowns.162

Unfortunately, this author’s own experience is a sad reminder that their whimsical portrait is a little closer to reality than might be admitted.

Gone are the days when posting a want ad or job description in the newspaper or even on-line surfaced the right kind of candidates. Times have changed. Boydell writes, “…the ideal candidates for most high-level, high-impact positions are not sitting at home reading want ads.”163 Adler agrees, “…companies need to move away from a classified ad mentality of listing boring, hard-to-find jobs and, instead, adopt a consumer-marketing approach to advertising.”164 Smart and Street note, “We observe that many managers source candidates by placing advertisements in one form or another. The overwhelming evidence from our field interviews is that ads are a good way to generate a tidal wave of resumes, but a lousy way to generate the right flow of candidates.”165

163 Boydell, Deutsch, and Remillard, You’re Not the Person I Hire!: A CEO’s Survival Guide to Hiring Top Talent, 83.
164 Adler, Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams, 66.
Adler summarizes the bottom-line mission for any sourcing program, “[I]t should be to find the strongest people possible in the shortest period of time at the lowest reasonable cost.” The authors of Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage note that the most successful companies know and tap the right talent pools for their hires. More than likely, the strongest people are not those who are immediately available or those who are the most aggressive in pursuing the job, but passive candidates who are right now happily employed somewhere else.

**Who Are Passive Candidates?**

Almost uniquely and insightfully, Janet Boydel has broken the total workforce into a descending pyramid of four distinct, but increasingly populated levels. Starting at the top of the pyramid she describe four pools of candidates,

The Non-Candidates: Not open to any opportunity. Very settled in current position. A “lifer” or near-future retiree who is actively resistant to the possibility of change.

The Sleeper Candidates: Unconsciously open to a better opportunity. Successful and happy in current position. Not looking, no current resume, but open-minded. May initially be resistant. Can be brought around for a compelling opportunity and motivational factors. Requires professional sourcing and recruiting.

Selective Candidates: Consciously open to a better opportunity. Employed and satisfied. May have a current resume. Checks job boards occasionally for compelling positions, but not actively pursuing a job change. Requires savvy recruiting. Critical source of Top 5% Talent.

Aggressive candidates: Actively seeking a new position. May be unemployed or unhappy in current position. Actively seeking employment; applying for numerous positions, actively interviewing, eager to find a new job and may not be selective about the job or company. Responds to numerous ads hoping for a call. 80% of applicants; marginal source of Top 5% Talent.

---


167 Editor, *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage*, 103.

In her opinion, the candidate pools to avoid are the Non-Candidates and the Aggressive Candidates – the top and bottom pools. The untapped pools are the two passive pools in the middle: the Sleeper Candidates and the Selective Candidates.

Adler agrees but offers perhaps a slightly more balanced perspective, “Too many managers believe that active candidates are below average and all passive candidates are great. Realistically, there are some very good active candidates and some pretty bad passive candidates.” The truth is an organization is looking for the right candidate regardless of the pool from which he is now a part. However, to ignore the two pools where passive candidates live is to be potentially cut off from less-tapped sources of the right kinds of talent. But what would motivate a Sleeper or Selective candidate to consider a change, knowing she is likely happily engaged in her current job and her employer is likely predisposed to do what it takes to keep her?

**Opportunity Attracts Passive Candidates**

A new and different opportunity may be the impetus to consider a change. And while some sources simply throw the “o” word out there imploring their readers to offer new opportunities, the two sources that have written most deeply and thoughtfully on the subject have some very specific thoughts on the issue. Lou Adler, one of these two sources writes, “When considering whether to apply, top people want the ad to clearly explain the challenges and growth opportunities….When accepting a job offer, compensation is not the primary consideration. The opportunity and challenges inherent in the job are.” Boydell’s book, the other best resource, pushes it a little farther, “These [passive candidates] are not people who are going to walk into the HR Department. You need to attract them through means beyond traditional want ads, arguing that your

---


170 Ibid., 69.
situation is a better opportunity than their current role or other roles they may be evaluating. These authors agree that the organization wishing to hire a passive candidate must take the initiative, offering an opportunity that touches the candidate more deeply in their soul than does their current position.

But to hire passive candidates, an organization must plan farther ahead. Adler elaborates on why it may take a passive candidate longer to decide on a new opportunity by listing five decision-making criteria in prioritized order that he believes top talent uses when considering a new job,

1. The job match. The best people want to do work that challenges them and allows them to grow in areas they deem important.
2. The hiring manager. Top people want to work for leaders and mentors who can help them reach their goals.
3. The quality of the team. The team is a very important consideration for a top person. Meeting strong potential coworkers can overcome other concerns and minimize the chance of accepting a counteroffer.
4. The company. A strong company with great employer branding certainly makes it easier to get someone initially interested, but these factors are less important when a top person makes the final decision to accept or not.
5. The compensation package. As long as the compensation package is reasonable, most top people don’t consider it the number-one criteria. Only when the comp package is very high or very low does it become the primary consideration.

For Adler, the true difference between an available or aggressive candidate and a passive candidate is only one of time spent making the decision: the former is interested more in survival thus his decision is quicker; the latter is more interested in impact and making a difference with the next season of his life, therefore his decision is slower.

He summarizes his thinking well, “If you want to hire better people, you’ll need to offer better jobs. If you want to hire passive candidates, you’ll also need to offer

---

171 Boydell, Deutsch, and Remillard, You’re Not the Person I Hired!: A CEO’s Survival Guide to Hiring Top Talent, 83.

172 Adler, Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams, 69-70.
better careers.”

Passive candidates are looking for a career to which they can give their life away. Offer them such an opportunity to do so and they may just come. Boydell reminds that an organization must be sure to “…describe the opportunity they want, not your needs.” To focus on the passive candidates is to be very conscious that they are looking at this new opportunity through a “What’s in it for me?” lens. After all, they are already happily engaged.

**Passive Candidates Can be Found Through Referrals**

Passive candidates must be pursued; they will not likely seek your organization out. Though admittedly there is a less than clear demarcation between the two pools, this section will explore how referrals can be used to approach the Selective Candidate pool while leaving how to approach the Sleeper Candidates for the next section.

Everyone knows someone. This is the simple idea behind a referral. Boydell writes, “Employees are your most viable sourcing channel for finding Top Talent. Your best people already know other great people.” Adler adds, “As far as I’m concerned, a proactive company employee referral program should be at the core of every sourcing strategy….Your best employees know other great employees, so you need to tap into this network in an aggressive way.” Kathy Shwiff in *Hiring People* reports from a 2005 study stating...

---

173 Ibid., 69.


175 Ibid., 99.

survey that 82% of employers were satisfied with the job candidates acquired through employee referrals.\textsuperscript{177}

Smart and Street recommend using professional and personal networks as well, noting, “…a full 77 percent of them [the industry leaders they spoke to] cited referrals as their top technique for generating a flow of the right candidates for their business.”\textsuperscript{178} And Shwiff quotes Adler saying, “Employee referrals are the single best way to find more top people…At least 50 percent of the people you hire should come from this group.”\textsuperscript{179} Clearly, the relationship between a current employee and a professional or personal friend – a passive candidate – opens the door for your organization to present what might be a better opportunity than their current one; an opportunity that truly touches their heart.

**Passive Candidates Can be Found Through Recruiters**

It would be wise to pause a moment here and ask several questions: Have all other avenues been pursued? Have the most obvious candidates been reviewed? Have the decision-makers looked inside the organization yet? Springer recommends just such a look first, “Before engaging a recruiter or advertising your opening, look inside your organization for potential candidates….With insiders, you [already] know their limitations.”\textsuperscript{180} Such a caution is raised because hiring an external recruiter brings certain drawbacks, as well as certain advantages, and perhaps spending more than was budgeted for the search.


\textsuperscript{179} Shwiff, *Hiring People: Recruit and Keep the Brightest Stars*, 32.

The first drawback may be the cost. The authors of *Hiring and Keeping the Best People* estimate the fee to be in the neighborhood of 30 percent of the new hire’s first year’s total compensation.\(^{181}\) The same authors also point out four times when it is not cost-effective to bring in an outside recruiter: (1) when the candidate pool is small and known to management; (2) when the requirements of the position and the qualifications of the candidate are both clear; (3) when the position requires a large amount of “hard” technical expertise; and (4) when it is a low-level position.\(^{182}\) A second drawback these authors warn of is abdicating hiring to the professionals, especially for a key executive position. Some organizations may be tempted to detach themselves from the process or to turn it over to the recruiter altogether.\(^{183}\) Any organization using outside, paid professionals must be on its guard against this.

The last drawback is obvious, but important to note: they are from the outside and are therefore unacquainted with the heart and soul of your organization. Certainly as highly trained professionals they are undoubtedly quick studies. Nonetheless they are coming from the outside looking in and will only understand at best the majority of what makes your organization tick. Smart and Street are mindful of this and write, “Recruiters remain a key source for executive talent, but they can do only so much if you don’t expose them to the inner culture and workings of your business.”\(^{184}\) It will be up to the hiring company to spend sufficient time with their recruiter so they can get to know your organization’s unique “way” of doing things. You must treat them like partners rather than as merely hirelings.\(^{185}\)

---

\(^{181}\) Editor, *Hiring and Keeping the Best People*, 38.

\(^{182}\) Ibid., 39.

\(^{183}\) Ibid.


\(^{185}\) Ibid., 58.
If an organization has exhausted all other easier and less costly avenues to surface candidates who can hit the success profile target then turning to a recruiter makes good sense. Hiring a professional has some definite advantages. Walter Dinteman in *Zero Defect Hiring* writes of two big benefits: (1) professional recruiting is a dedicated service and therefore spends 24/7 on it; and (2) it may actually save money by reducing the number of days an open position remains open, thus reducing lost “opportunity costs.”\(^{186}\) As well, the high-quality recruiters have specialized experience in their fields as well as a web or network of contacts and/or passive candidates. Boydell, a recruiter, summarizes her experience with three observations: (1) a highly successful search from a reputable and quality professional recruiter will take on average 14 weeks. (2) you can get it right or you can get it fast; and (3) just remember desperation hiring does not work.\(^{187}\) Certainly there are times when having a dedicated and well-connected professional or professional team working on your side makes the most sense.

Recruiters for professional sports teams leave no stone unturned in their search for the right athlete for their team’s open position. Hardly a college or university is untouched in their quest. They have an unwavering conviction that getting the right person in the right place every time is worth it. In fact, that is what it takes to win. And so, with a target sheet of outcomes and characteristics for this special athlete they set out, determined not to settle, but to bring back the one who will fulfill the target not just this year but for the next several years to come.

In the same way a hiring executive, armed with a success profile, must leave no stone unturned in his quest for finding the right member for his team. To only search among the Aggressive and Available candidates is to leave off prematurely. He must


search in the harder to fish pools of the Selective and Sleeper Candidates, where the passive candidates live, in order to truly have a better shot at finding the very best Mr. Right that can be found within his budget. Referrals are a high-quality, high-payoff means of getting into the Selective Candidate pool while a professional recruiter may be the best and most cost-effective means of approaching those in the more passive Sleeper pool. But if the hiring executive never seeks, he will never know and may never find who he is looking for.

What lengths is the church going to in order to find the right pastoral candidates for its open positions? Is it still relying on the traditional but ineffective sourcing strategy of the seminary or the Internet? Or is it exploring other options? Has the church just grown lazy or has it just grown weary?

In the Church

The marketplace best practice suggests that the right pastoral candidate will likely not be found by using a traditional sourcing strategy, but will rather be found by walking down roads less traveled, namely looking for passive candidates. Even so, these individuals will be found through either staff referrals or professional recruiters. And they must be approached by those who are prepared to share a new and compelling opportunity with them. Only new opportunities will cause them to seek the Lord’s guidance for making a change. The church is trying to find a way to look into these pools, yet with integrity remain true to the Scriptures.

Looking for Passive Candidates

Two church references make any substantial mention of a church’s sourcing strategy. Gary McIntosh in Staff Your Church for Growth is walking in lock step with the best practices of the marketplace as he writes,

The old way of looking for an associate staff member is no longer working – position opens; acquire resumes from a trusted seminary; fill the position. The
new way of hiring is strategic – position opens; write description based on church’s mission, values, and strategic vision; network with other leaders; fill position with person of character, competence, and compatibility.\textsuperscript{188}

Finding the right staff member with yesterday’s strategies no longer works. Today’s search requires far greater forethought and planning on the part of the church and/or the hiring pastor or search committee to clearly define exactly what is desired in this role. This more holistic definition has been labeled a success profile in the preceding section. Finding the right staff member today is also much more relational, using personal, professional and staff referrals in order to generate the kind of candidate that might be right for each church.

McIntosh echoes the same themes from the marketplace authors reviewed previously above,

Your chances for a successful hire are significantly greater if you are creative in your search techniques. Look for pools of potential candidates by spreading the word among professional and social contacts – you never know who may know the perfect individual for your church. Be sure to include church members, seminary and college placement offices, denominational leaders, and even professional search firms in your network. Let persons who are serving other churches in similar ministry areas know of your search as they have their own networks of individuals who may fit your position.\textsuperscript{189}

Certainly these practices are not the exclusive domain of the for-profit, the non-profit or even the church world. Perhaps they are common because they are common sense.

But what about actually targeting passive candidates, pastors who are already on staff at another church? McIntosh offers his opinion though it is more veiled than direct,

Hire only people who have served in at least two previous staff positions. In other words, do not hire people straight out of school [seminary]. Why not? Because no one is satisfied with her first job. Yes, there are always exceptions. Yet the vast majority of people find something wrong with their first position, no

\textsuperscript{188} McIntosh, \textit{Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century}, 56.

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 57.
matter how good it is. It is human nature not to appreciate what you have when you have nothing to compare it with. People naturally look for greener pastures and will move on to another church. There is another important reason to hire only staff who have been in at least two other positions. In the first staff position, most people assume all churches work the same way. Only in the second position does a person learn that churches are different. By the third church, new staff members are choosing your church and you are choosing them. They are much more likely to stay with you for the long haul.¹⁰⁰

“By the third church, new staff members are choosing your church and you are choosing them.” There comes a time, it seems, when even a good staff member is ready to entertain another opportunity. But those staff members understand the best time to consider a new job is when you already have one, so they – presumably – prayerfully wait as a Selective Candidate for an opportunity to come along that touches their heart more than their current role does. If he is not approving the practice of pursuing passive candidates, McIntosh is at the very least giving assent to the fact that it happens.

The only other author in the church literature who shares his views on a sourcing strategy is Bill Hybels in *Courageous Leadership*. He shares his thoughts this way,

Peter Drucker, the best-selling management author, once told me that the team members I was looking for at the time were most likely neither unhappy nor unemployed. ‘If you find someone whose qualifications look good, but he or she is unhappy or unemployed, be very cautious. The kind of people you are looking for are probably making huge contributions and setting records somewhere. They are probably deliriously happy and much loved by the people they work with. Go after that type. Go after proven competence.’

That was very valuable counsel that I follow to this day. It echoes the words of the apostle Paul who insists in 1 Timothy 3:10 that every new deacon should be “first tested.”¹⁰¹

This is exactly the same strategy of the marketplace, targeting the happy and productive passive candidate and offering him a new and different opportunity that might more touch his heart.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 68.

¹⁰¹ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 84.
It would seem McIntosh and Hybels both suggest or even advocate pursing the passive pastoral candidate, perhaps from the Selective or even the Sleeper pools, as the primary pool of candidates for their open positions. In fact, as the article from Christianity Today pointed out in the introduction, the rise of the Christian recruiting firm over the past decade is probably in response to the church desiring, but not knowing how, to tap into those less traveled pathways in the prayerful hope of recruiting the right pastor for their particular role.

The Opportunity Profile

Interestingly, in church circles today one can find on the Internet what is called an Opportunity Profile. This document lists a local church’s open position in the form of an opportunity a passive candidate may read and wish to prayerfully consider. An example is found in Appendix C. An Opportunity Profile like this is right in line with the state of the art in business practice today and written in the winsome way it is, targets the passive candidate’s ideals, dreams and desires; it targets his heart to explore whether or not he would like to investigate it further. It is a true-to-life example of targeting passive candidates who are happily and gainfully employed already in a local church, but are investigating in a very low key way whether or not they are interested in considering other opportunities. And it gives such a candidate the desire to seek the Lord’s leading for his next season of ministry.

Summary Regarding Best Practices for Resolution 3

Great candidates are typically not the Available or the Aggressive candidates. Rather they are the passive candidates who will have to be wooed by providence to a new church by being presented with a new opportunity. If this new opportunity touches their heart and fits better with their divine design than their current role, they may indeed leave their current position after a season of prayer and discussion with loved ones and mentors. An Opportunity Profile may, in fact, be the kind of tool the Lord uses to lead the
right pastor with the right gifts and talents to the right role within another local church. Presenting such an opportunity to untapped pools seems biblical, as it leaves the ultimate direction and decision to the Lord. Targeting called and productive pastors from other churches, however, seems to be going beyond the boundaries of the Scriptures.

**Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 4**

The traditional interview does not work for repeatedly and predictably identifying the right person for an open position in any organization. Brad Smart paints the real but unflattering picture of the traditional, unstructured interview many hiring executives routinely use today in the marketplace, “Unstructured interviews include one or more of the following characteristics: lack a question format, short duration (less than an hour), casual questioning (‘Tell me about yourself’), little planning (no job analysis, no job description, no written competencies), and no systematic analysis of data (the hire/no hire conclusion is made in minutes).”

Though the conversational and informal style of questions used during such an interview may put a candidate at ease and help the hiring executive learn some basic facts about him, the lack of structure and advanced preparation virtually ensure a mis-hire. Using the identical process, the church cannot hope to produce anything but the same results.

The interview process is ineffective primarily because most hiring executives see it as a decision-making tool rather than as a data-gathering tool. Diane Arthur points out one implication of this faulty tendency in *Recruiting, Interviewing, Selecting and Orienting New Employees*,

A commonly held but erroneous belief is that interviewing does not require any real preparation. The perception is that an interview is little more than two people sitting down together, having a conversation. As they talk, one person – the interviewer – asks questions, while the other – the applicant – answers the

---

questions. Whether a job offer is extended depends on just how well the applicant answers the questions. Alder surfaces a second flaw, “One of the biggest problems [with the traditional unstructured interview] is that too much emphasis is placed on the interaction between the candidate and the interviewer, and too little on the candidate’s ability and motivation to do the job.” Such decision-making interviews only reveal a candidate’s ability to interview well or that they have some level of interpersonal connection with the interviewer.

Research affirms the flaw of seeing the interview as a decision-making tool. In their study Hunter and Hunter ranked the unstructured interview sixth, just behind education, in its correlation (with a .14 coefficient) with predicting a candidate’s future success on the job. Campion, Pursell and Brown’s research shows the unstructured interview can only predict “best” employees 55% of the time, just 5% better than a coin flip at 50%. While Peter Drucker estimates an inferior 33% success rate and Brad Smart estimates a dismal 25% are “A” players. Sadly, the traditional, unstructured interview many decision-makers used yesterday and will use again tomorrow is ineffective for repeatedly identifying “right fit” people.

---


194 Adler, Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams, 13.


197 Drucker, The Essential Drucker: The Best of Sixty Years of Peter Drucker's Essential Writings on Management, 127.

198 Smart, Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People, 38.
In the Marketplace

The business world has known of the ineffectiveness of the unstructured interview for decades it seems, but only in the last ten years has it begun to implement changes. At best, getting hiring “right” no better than 50% of the time is unacceptable in terms of cost and lost productivity. And in no other practice would a 50/50 failure rate be acceptable. But there is hope. Research has demonstrated that the structured, behavior-based interview is able to distinguish right fit hires anywhere from 70% to over 90% of the time because it sees the interview as a data-gathering rather than a decision-making tool.

Structured Interviews are Superior Predictors

The structured, behavior-based interview is based on the premise that it is a data gathering tool. And the principle around which the data is gathered is that past performance is the best predictor of future performance. It is the idea of a track record and a trajectory. Anything – whether delivering results or manifesting behaviors in interpersonal relationships – leaves behind it a track record and carries with it a level of momentum into the future, what can be called a trajectory. The structured interview strives to surface a candidate’s real-life work and behavior patterns, believing that the trajectory from that track record will be the best predictor of whether or not a candidate will ultimately be successful and fit in within his new organization.

But surfacing a candidate’s track record requires a highly structured interview format. Brad Smart breaks down his preferred interview agenda as follows: (1) Ice breakers 10 minutes; (2) Education review 20 minutes; (3) Work history 155 minutes; (4)...

---


200 Smart, Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People, 3.
Plans and goals 10 minutes; (5) Self-appraisal 15 minutes; and (6) Competency questions 30 minutes. One should note this is a four-hour interview, characteristic of the Topgrading intensity and thoroughness. While Smart would not advocate it, shorter times could be substituted driving down the interview time to perhaps 90-120 minutes. Further, an identical format will be used for every candidate. This creates consistency and objectivity thus eliminating the inherent variability that comes through alternate interviewer’s differing agendas or perceptions.

Consistency and objectivity also require asking each candidate the same set of questions. Klinvex writes, “A truly structured approach to interviewing involves standardizing not only the interviewing process but also the interview content and the method of evaluation.” Smart and Street recommend using the same five questions in any structured interview,

(1) What were you hired to do?
(2) What accomplishments are you most proud of?
(3) What were some low points during that job?
(4) Who were the people you worked with? Specifically:
   (a) What was your boss’s name, and how do you spell that; What was it like working with him/her? What will he/she tell me were your biggest strengths and areas for improvement?
   (b) How would you rate the team you inherited on an A, B, C scale? What changes did you make? Did you hire anybody? Fire anybody? How would you rate the team when you left it on an A, B, C scale?
(5) Why did you leave that job?

It is this standardization of questions that seems to form the foundation for the power of the structured interview. Its goal is to establish a track record – a “connect-the-dots” regression – of the recent history of candidate’s actually delivered results and behaviors. And repeatedly using these same questions assembles a collection of concrete “This is

201 Ibid., 322.
202 Klinvex, O’Connell, and Klinvex, Hiring Great People, 102.
203 Smart and Street, Who: The A Method for Hiring, 82.
what I did…” data set rather than just erroneous feelings, intuitions or presuppositions on the part of the interviewer.

Such an interview is markedly different from the traditional, unstructured interview. First, the hiring executive asks the candidate the five questions sequentially for each job held in the past fifteen years, beginning with the earliest and working toward the most current. In other words, five questions about each job are asked before moving chronologically closer to the next most recent job where the same five questions will be asked again. Smart and Street say this chronological order is crucial to the process and cannot be overemphasized. It is, in fact, this historically-grounded pattern that establishes a candidate’s actual track record of performance.

Second, the hiring executive simply asks a follow-up question after each one of the five, such as “Tell me more,” or “That’s interesting. What happened next?” instead of taking over the conversation or dropping into sales mode. Continuing to press into what the candidate volunteered may add color or texture to the data point just collected. The hiring executive also uses a technique they call “TORC” or Threat Of Reference Check as they ask the candidate questions. They have found this technique “What will your supervisor tell me about this topic when I call him?” encourages candidates to be more forthright, concrete and accurate as he knows his former bosses will be asked about the material he has just provided during the interview. Of course this means references must be followed up and the candidate’s answers evaluated next to their supervisor’s answers.

Yet this process is not done as an investigative reporter looking for “dirt” on a candidate, but rather as a biographer interviewing a subject he really wants to get to know. Why? Because the structured interview is not about making decisions; it is for

---

204 Ibid., 92.
205 Ibid., 85.
collecting data. It is not about making an impulsive, real-time judgment based on first impressions. It is about assembling the pattern of a person’s life. It begins to identify the historical, actual track record from a candidate’s past all the way into his present. It is a data-based record that suggestively predicts the future trajectory of a candidate’s work performance. And it is this trajectory that will eventually be evaluated for “right fit” after all of the interviews are concluded.

Research validates that the structured interview more repeatedly and reliably predicts “right” candidates. As noted earlier, Campion, et al. show the predictability of a future candidate’s success at nearly 70% when interviewed using this strategy. Christopher Orpen in “Patterned Behavior Description Interviews Versus Unstructured Interviews: A Comparative Validity Study” writes that following only a three-hour manager training, “…these results indicate that interviewers trained in the patterned behavioral technique [a structured interview] predicted the future job performance of interviewees more accurately than did interviewers trained in standard interviewing techniques.”

Huffcutt and Woehr in “Further Analysis of Employment Interview Validity: A Quantitative Evaluation of Interviewer-Related Structuring Methods” suspect that just the structure of the interview, including the consistency and content of the questions and the real-life data they elicit, more than the training of the interviewer itself accounts for the high correlation with predictability. And Brad Smart in _Topgrading_ believes he has

---


helped numerous companies achieve over 90% success rate for hiring “A” candidates using his vastly more thorough and intense structured interview process.208

The structured interview predicts future performance and fit far better than the traditional, unstructured interview. Training of hiring executives may help, but having the mindset of using it for data-gathering, preserving a high level of structure, collecting actual data and remaining objective throughout the entire interview seem to be the primary reasons for its reliability. The structured interview is meant to surface track records and suggest trajectories that more reliably predict a good fit with the new role and the new environment. Yet one such interview is certainly not enough. The literature recommends at least three structured interviews and when seeing the reference checks as an opportunity for another, four is practical.

**Four Structured Interviews Surface a True Track Record**

The initial telephone call is the first structured interview any candidate will have with a hiring executive. It is a screening interview to determine in less than thirty minutes if this is the type of candidate who is appropriate for the position or whether he is not. Smart and Street recommend the following questions,

(1) What are your career goals?
(2) What are you really good at professionally?
(3) What are you not good at or not interested in doing professionally?
(4) Who were your last five bosses, and how will they each rate your performance on a 1-10 scale when we talk to them?209

In such an interview the hiring executive is listening for specifics, not vague, hypothetical or promise-type “I would” or “I want to” answers. Specific, concrete data are necessary

208 Smart, *Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People*, 43.

to begin establishing the outcome and competency track record that will be carried over into the next step, the first face-to-face structured interview.

The first face-to-face interview is the second structured interview a candidate will undergo. These interviews are conducted with only those candidates previously qualified through the phone interview and thought able to both deliver the desired outcomes with the desired competencies. Since an example of the format, questions and process has already been detailed above, no future elaboration on this interview will be necessary.

The third structured interview is called by some the “focused” interview. In it, the hiring executive homes-in on three key questions: “(1) The purpose of this interview is to talk about (fill in the blank with one or more expected outcomes or competencies); (2) What are your biggest accomplishments in this area during your career; and (3) What are your insights into your biggest mistakes and lessons learned in this area?” Smart and Street explain their reasoning for a focused interview like this,

The focused interview is similar to the commonly used behavioral interview with one major difference: it is focused on the outcomes and competencies of the scorecard [the success profile], not some vaguely defined job description or manager’s intuition. You have a good idea who you want by this point, but you still need to be as certain as you can that candidate and position are a perfect match. The focused interview is, in essence, your odds enhancer.

It is one more opportunity to anchor some previously obtained data points in one of the candidate’s particular work or competency patterns, or fill in some of the gaps of an existing pattern a hiring executive might suspect is there. Simply put, it is one more opportunity to collect pertinent, actual data for reconstructing a candidate’s track record.

\footnotesize

210 Ibid., 100.

211 Ibid.
The fourth and final set of structured interviews is the reference checks. These final “interviews” serve as a way to test what a candidate revealed as true life history.

Smart and Street tell a story from one client to illustrate this point,

We hired a chief financial officer. We were not allowed to make reference calls because she wanted to keep her candidacy a secret. And she was a disaster. Her problem was she was too used to process and routine. She moved to a place that is more complicated and stressful, and she could not handle the stress. Without having a chance to do reference calls, you lose 25 percent of the information you should know.\textsuperscript{212}

They recommend contacting a minimum of seven references: three past bosses, two peers or customers and two subordinates\textsuperscript{213} and asking the following questions,

(1) In what context did you work with the person?
(2) What were the person’s biggest strengths?
(3) What were the person’s biggest areas for improvement back then?
(4) How would you rate his/her overall performance in that job on a 1-10 scale? What about his or her performance causes you to give that rating?
(5) The person mentioned that he/she struggled with (fill in the blank) in that job. Can you tell me more about that?\textsuperscript{214}

They also recommend having the candidate set up these reference interviews to increase the chances of actually getting to talk to a person who will be as candid as they need to be. While references are notoriously hard to talk with, let alone candidly, it must become a non-negotiable for the hiring executive, not his assistant, to complete them. These reference checks substitute for multiple face-to-face interviews with people who know and have worked with this individual in the recent past. Their insights are invaluable. References must be checked as an indispensable part of the interviewing process.

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., 105.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., 107.
Translate the Track Record into a Trajectory

Say a hiring executive has the vision to hire the best of the right kind of talent available and affordable. To him, it simply makes no sense to settle for less than the best. The target, the success profile, has been created to define what best and right looks like for the organization, not only defining what needs to be done but including also the appropriate competencies. The search has taken the executive down less traveled roads and surfaced some passive candidates who appear to be able to deliver the outcomes. A team of two has interviewed the qualified candidates using a structured interview process and the field has been narrowed to the final two. The final question is simple: Which one should be hired?

If the process has worked well then the hiring executive has enough information to extrapolate each candidate’s track record into a future trajectory. The analogy of shooting an arrow at an archery target may help to describe the idea. Every arrow shot from an archer follows a path. If that path were photographed with a high-speed camera the point-by-point track record of the arrow could be plotted. And as the arrow’s track record became increasingly clear, connecting one dot to the dot immediately preceding it, the path would be called a trajectory. This trajectory predicts where, if at all, an arrow will strike the target. In short, the best candidate is the one whose trajectory is already flying toward the bull’s eye of your organization’s success profile target.

The marketplace literature recommends at least three (four if counting the reference checks) structured, behavior-based interviews to establish an accurate and true-to-life regression of any candidate’s work and behavior performance. Evaluating and translating this track record data into a candidate’s trajectory more reliably and predictably distinguishes not only a “right” candidate from a “wrong” one, but is also sufficient to able to distinguish “best” from “next best.” What has the church learned about interviewing candidates? Is it still recommending the traditional, unstructured
approach or is it recommending a more rigorous, objective, data-based approach that allows those hiring in the church to create and predict a candidate’s trajectory?

**In the Church**

Three references address the topic of interviewing within the church with any degree of substance. Interestingly, these references dating from 1997 to 2007 suggest an evolution in interviewing thought or perhaps an adaptation of the marketplace interview process described above. All things considered from its most recent literature, the church currently shares and recommends the same structured, behavior-based interviews described by the marketplace.

Harold Westing dedicates a chapter of his 1997 book, *Church Staff Handbook,* to “Conducting an Interview.” In this chapter he basically offers advice for doing the very best level of traditional interview possible. He warns against making a hiring decision based on a first impression\(^\text{215}\) and encourages both good listening and good conversation techniques in order to assess a candidate’s ability in interpersonal relationships\(^\text{216}\); advises every interviewer to listen and clarify a candidate’s answers\(^\text{217}\); and suggests multiple interviews.\(^\text{218}\) While he counsels against using a list of questions on a worksheet,\(^\text{219}\) he very clearly wants concrete and clear examples and illustrations of a candidate’s answers.\(^\text{220}\) To conclude the chapter he discusses “off resume” qualities, such as commitment level, godliness, character and ministry skills – that have been called

\[^{215}\text{Westing, *Church Staff Handbook: How to Build an Effective Ministry Team*, 177.}\]

\[^{216}\text{Ibid., 178.}\]

\[^{217}\text{Ibid., 179.}\]

\[^{218}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[^{219}\text{Ibid., 178.}\]

\[^{220}\text{Ibid., 179.}\]
“competencies” above – that he recommends looking for to make the very best hire possible. But since every interview is “unscripted” there is some level of uncertainty about the true level of data consistency between good candidates. His approach may still leave too much to intuition.

Gary McIntosh shares his recommendations on interviewing in a chapter of his 2000 book, *Staff Your Church for Growth* called “Recruiting Staff.” He advises using two interviewers, to preface some interview questions with “What will I likely hear when I talk to your references?” and advises, “The main way to project what a person will do or be in your church is to review his track record.” He also suggests looking for a good fit in behavioral and character qualities. He then offers the following advice for the second and third interviews,

During the second interview, tell the candidate more about your church and what you expect [presumably by way of performance]; then ask questions that will give her a chance to tell you how well she will actually perform. Be sure to ask at least five key questions [the same five] and to push for facts. These questions keep the focus on the position, and the answers reveal the person’s substance.

This advice certainly mirrors the interviewing best practices described in the marketplace literature from the past decade.

Finally, Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont write on interviewing in the chapter “Hiring Right to Manage Easier” in their 2007 book, *When Moses Meets Aaron*. They

---

221 Ibid., 179-84.
222 McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century*, 58.
223 Ibid., 64.
224 Ibid., 67.
225 Ibid., 62-3.
226 Ibid., 59.
adamantly warn against hiring after only one interview\textsuperscript{227} or failing to check a candidate’s references.\textsuperscript{228} Then after briefly reviewing the four kinds of interviews available: (1) the traditional interview, the hypothetically-rooted interview (2) the situational interview and (3) case study interviews, they identify the behavior-based interview as best for assessing core competencies.\textsuperscript{229} They write, “Asking people to talk about other times and situations in which they demonstrated these competencies is the best way to assess their fit with the job. Behavior-based interviewing is most effectively used in the second round of interviews when you are trying to assess the competencies and congregational fit.”\textsuperscript{230} They conclude their chapter by suggesting both questions and a sample outline for the structured interview. They are certainly mining for actual, past examples of performance and behavior with these interviews. Again, this is consistent with the best practices in the marketplace.

It seems that there has been a progression of thought regarding the interview process within the church. Over the course of one decade its authors are now recommending interviews with a high degree of structure, a set of basic but consistent questions that surface what a candidate actually did rather than what he might do, and using multiple interviews in order to gather more and better real-life “what I did” data. While it is not as well fleshed out as it is in the marketplace literature, the structured interview process that gathers data and then uses it to establish a candidate’s trajectory is both the church and the marketplace’s recommended practice. Then, using this actual

\textsuperscript{227} Rendle and Beaumont, \textit{When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations}, 75.

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 76.

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 85.

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid.
data, the candidate who is already aiming at the bull’s eye of the success profile is, by
definition, the best match for the role and for the church.

Summary Regarding Best Practices for Resolution 4

Making great hires requires interviewing for trajectory and hiring for match. The key for accomplishing this practice is using four structured, behavior-based
interviews to assemble an actual, historical track record from a candidate’s past jobs and
then using that track record to suggest a future trajectory. Objectively evaluating this
trajectory more accurately and reliably predicts a candidate’s future probability of being
successful in his new organization or church. In short, it predicts his degree of match.
Gathering input is vital to determining a “right fit” match.

Summary: A Biblical Right Fit Hiring Process

The first half of this chapter dedicated itself to examining the raw data for
defining a pastoral hiring process that can be called biblical. These data covered three
intuitively key areas that are typical for any hiring process. The first data set surfaced that
God’s objective for doing ministry is team. Therefore it becomes incumbent on church
hiring decision-makers to develop a conviction regarding hiring that honors and aligns
with God’s objective. The hiring objective then is not to simply fill an empty seat with
“almost,” it is instead to pray, wait and surface the missing “teammate.”

The second data set surfaced that to be invited onto such a team must be a
function of role and fit. To that end, four biblical C’s for defining the role and evaluating
the fit were examined: Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility. No pastor who
fails in the area of Christian Character can be a right fit pastor; no pastor whose Calling
and Competence suggest a S.H.A.P.E. other than the S.H.A.P.E. required by the role can
be a right fit pastor; and no pastor whose level of theological, interpersonal or functional
Compatibility is less than the threshold level can be a right fit pastor. Only the pastor
whose Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility are of the right match for the
role, and who also evidence the greatest degree of fit, will be the ultimate right fit pastor. Thus biblically defining the hiring “target” is critical.

And the third data set surfaced that a biblical hiring process more than likely uncovers right fit pastors through dedication to prayer and to a series of face-to-face interviews that are objective and thorough. Using one or more of the self-administered instruments examined above may prove beneficial in the right amounts, but may not be substituted for a relationally-based interviewing process.

These data sets were then synthesized into four “right fit” hiring resolutions that anchor a biblical right fit hiring process. These four resolutions describe a hiring process that begins with the conviction of the decision-makers in the church to partner with God to prayerfully and by hard work discern God’s man for the role. The process continues by defining the bull’s eye for the position in terms of biblically-based criteria as well as defining minimum acceptable thresholds of fit. It then goes on to outline how to look for the right kinds of candidates and concludes by defining the matching process such that the trajectories of potential candidates can be evaluated based on how close to the bull’s eye they will come.

The second half of this chapter has been dedicated to examining a state of the art hiring process from the marketplace literature finding that in many ways its best practices affirm and support the biblical principles articulated in the right fit hiring resolutions. In fact, many of these best practices have already been embraced by the church and are advocated within its own literature over the last decade. These practices become the muscle and flesh needed to make a truly stand alone “how to” hiring process template.

From the marketplace and the church regarding Resolution 1 it has been seen that having some policies and procedures might help encourage a church decision-maker to look hard enough and long enough to get role and fit right rather than just hiring impulsively to fill the job. Having the direct supervisor take the day-to-day lead in prayer
and candidate evaluation will also likely improve the ownership and the fit of the final candidate. Not to mention having the conviction of vision to leave a position open rather than fill it with “almost” speaks volumes about the importance of getting hiring the “right fit” team member. These proven practices “flesh out” what it means to hire for role and for fit and to preserve God’s objective for team.

From the marketplace and the church regarding Resolution 2 it has been seen that a success profile is a superior way to define both the role and the fit over a traditional job description. A well-done success profile defines not only the outcomes expected from the role after 12 months on the job, but how those outcomes are to be delivered. By rigorously defining outcomes and then overlaying the ideal fit of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility a much clearer picture emerges of what the target right fit pastor actually looks like. And more clearly defining outcomes and expectations up front leads to greater fulfillment, greater productivity and longer tenure.

With the marketplace and church’s best practices regarding Resolution 3, this review noted the greatest divergence from the biblical thought. The Scriptures do not seem to teach that one church intentionally hiring away another church’s pastor is biblical. However, because of the rise of the church recruiting firm, the Opportunity Profile is perhaps a way to invite both the traditional and non-traditional candidates to consider an opportunity for a different role while leaving the final decision to the prayerful candidate and providence.

And finally from the marketplace and the church regarding Resolution 4 it has been seen that treating interviews as data-gathering tools rather than making them decision-making tools is key. Using four interviews, from the first telephone interview to the final reference check interview are best done as structured, behavior-based conversations that focus on what a pastor has actually done in the past. It is this momentum of trajectory that heightens confidence that this man can indeed hit the target
defined in the success profile. The church’s decision-makers then are seeking the pastor whose trajectory is already aiming at the bull’s eye of their success profile.

In light of these further findings the preliminary “how to” outline has been updated in Table 1 to reflect a final outline biblically-grounded and supported by marketplace best practices. This final definition of a biblical right fit hiring process embodies three key elements. First, the vertical load-bearing beams of its construction are deeply embedded into biblical bedrock and reach toward God’s objective for hiring. Second, marketplace best practices are used to stabilize and support these beams, and to serve and to move the hiring process forward in the direction of the scriptural principles. And third, its construction embodies this project’s two hypotheses, (1) that there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who pray and the church actually fulfilling its vision [via hiring well], and (2) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who use best business hiring practices and a church actually fulfilling its vision [via hiring well].

This idealized right fit hiring process template is the synthesis of non-negotiable biblical principles and state of the art best business practices. It becomes, in essence, the subjective and qualitative “scorecard” that will next be used to evaluate the hiring processes of two trend-setting churches. This scorecard will assign a “1” if a subject church virtually meets all of the functions and forms specified on a line of the template. A “3” will be assigned when a church does not even use a particular portion of the idealized template. And a “2” will be assigned very subjectively when a subject church meets the functional “spirit” of the template, but does it in an off best practices way. It is an in-between score, not fully expressing the template, but still reflecting some resemblance to it.

Next, Chapter 3 lays out the research roadmap and logic and then vets the two subject churches using Jim Collins’ non-profit “greatness” criteria.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Principles and Best Marketplace Practices</th>
<th>Church 1</th>
<th>Church 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) THE HIRING CONVICTION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Engage in persistent prayer (e.g. for discernment)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Exercise diligent patience to “get it right”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) By using policies and procedures to minimize impulsiveness and maximize objectivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) By requiring supervisors to take full ownership for hiring their direct reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) By leaving a role open rather than fill it with “almost”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) THE HIRING TARGET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to define a new team member’s role and minimum degree of fit using outcomes and the 4 C criteria of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility (e.g. a success profile).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Define the hiring “target” in terms of outcomes and the 4 C’s criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Define the minimum acceptable thresholds for each outcome and criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) THE CANDIDATES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to seriously consider only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required thresholds of fit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Consider traditional and non-traditional candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Use personal and professional networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Use referrals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Use an Opportunity Profile to surface passive candidates, if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) THE MATCHING PROCESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Use the structured, behavior-based style interviewing format as a data-gathering tool rather than a decision-making tool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Conduct no less than three of these kinds of interviews, with at least two being face-to-face</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Complete all reference checks, ideally as additional interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) Complete all candidate interviews before recommending the final “right fit” match for the team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – The Idealized Right Fit Hiring Pattern
CHAPTER 3
PROCEDURE AND RESEARCH METHOD

The research question for this project has been stated in Chapter 1: By what process can any local church repeatedly hire the best right fit pastor it can find and afford for its open role? The project has focused on this question for two interrelated reasons. First, Gary McIntosh has observed that leadership longevity is one of the most important components for any church desiring to experience a longer-term advancement of its vision. So hiring with a long-tenure view is one critical component for realizing increased vision achievement. Second, the corollary to his observation should also be true. Any church that has a decades-long track record of fulfilling its stated vision must have learned to hire well – to repeatedly recruit the right pastors with the right gifts and talents and place them in the right roles. This is the essence of Jim Collins’ “First Who…Then What” discovery from his Good to Great research and demonstrates the powerful, longer-term benefit to an organization of getting the right people “on the bus.”

Assuming their observations are true, those churches that learn to hire well, who more repeatedly hire right fit pastors, should realize better and longer-term vision achievement. Theoretically then, this project postulates that those churches that intentionally or intuitively follow a scripturally-grounded hiring process supplemented by

---

231 McIntosh, Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century, 65. This is a reiteration of his observation that short pastoral tenure is one of the major reasons many churches do not advance in their vision.

232 Author, “The Good to Great Pastor: An Interview with Jim Collins,” 50. When Leadership journal asked Collins about how a church might begin moving toward greatness, he replied, "By getting the right people in key seats."
best marketplace practices have the greatest probability – qualitatively speaking – of repeatedly make right fit hires. And the evidence of repeatedly making such right fit hires should be displayed through a longer-term achievement of such a church’s stated vision.

The two hypotheses of this project may then be stated more verbosely in order to illustrate the linkage between hiring well and vision achievement. The first hypothesis states that prayer on the part of a church hiring decision-maker plays a role in the right fit hiring process and therefore, ultimately, has an impact on longer-term church vision achievement. The second hypothesis is similar to it stating that undergirding the biblical hiring prescriptions with state of the art best practices from the marketplace also plays a role in the right fit process and therefore, ultimately, impacts longer-term church vision achievement. Thus, church hiring decision-makers who follow biblical principles, pray persistently and use best practices to supplement a biblically-grounded hiring process should repeatedly hire more right fit pastors as well as gain longer-term, up-and-to-the-right spiritual momentum for their churches.

Thus, theoretically, it should be a simple matter of identifying two churches that have long track records of achieving their stated visions, examining their hiring processes, and comparing them to the biblical right fit hiring process template from Figure 1. If these churches’ hiring processes qualitatively conform to the predicted biblically-grounded pattern then the linkages proposed by this project’s hypotheses will be counted as confirmed. And the predicted pattern will be shown also to have linkages that suggest following it will yield more right fit pastors more repeatedly and reliably.

While it is hoped that the conclusions of this project will be applicable to churches of any size, due to time constraints this project will limit itself to investigating the hiring processes of churches of more than 2,000 in Sunday worship attendance. And

---

233. This is simply assuming Collins’ “First Who…Then What” principle is true, and then working in reverse from what can be observed to one probable and legitimate cause.
because this project’s primary research question focuses on “how,” the case study has been selected as the research method of choice.

**Research Method**

A case, the unit of analysis for any research project, has been defined by Robert Yin as “The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result.” Thus, for this project the case, the unit of analysis, will be the hiring process for recruiting new pastoral staff into two large, Protestant church staffs. That such a method is actually the preferred means for studying such research questions is confirmed by Yin as well. He writes that using the case study method is most appropriate when (1) “how” or “why” research questions are being posed; (2) the investigator has little control over events; and (3) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context.

Regarding the first criterion, the type of research question under investigation, Yin explains, “…‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories, and experiments as the preferred research methods. This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence.” How a church’s hiring process works and why those decision-makers believe it works, their perceived linkages, are well within the preferred domain for the case study method and are, in fact, the very information desired by this project.

---

234 Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 17. Italics his.

235 Ibid., 29.

236 Ibid., 2.

237 Ibid., 9. Italics his.
Regarding the second two criteria, the amount of control the investigator has over the behavioral events and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events, Yin again elaborates,

The case study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated [as in a laboratory setting]. The case study relies on many of the same techniques as a history, but it adds two sources of evidence not usually included in the historian’s repertoire: direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events.238

As this investigation has no control either over the design of another church’s hiring process or its execution, this investigator cannot control whatever dependent and/or independent variables may exist. Nor can these variables be isolated and then investigated out of their complicated and intertwined context, as with certain other research questions that can be examined in a controlled laboratory. Then too, while history may shed some light on the question of how the church’s hiring process has changed over the decades, this project desires to better investigate contemporary events. For these reasons the case study method is selected as the superior and preferred method for researching the hiring processes of two large, Protestant churches.

Furthermore, John Hammond, professor at the Harvard Business School, enumerates three benefits of using the case study method. First, the case study investigates real life situations that other business executives have faced.239 The case study method is well-suited to looking at the straightforward, complicated and messy situations many practitioners face rather than experiments conducted in the controlled and sterile environment of a laboratory. Second, he mentions the breadth of exposure a case study brings to its readers. He says, “Because case studies cut across a range of organizations and situations, they provide you with an exposure far greater than you are

238 Ibid., 11.

likely to experience in your day-to-day routine. Looking “behind the curtain” so to speak through case studies of two trend-setting churches will not only be highly instructive, but highly interesting and perhaps the chance of a lifetime. Then third he mentions that the case study method helps develop not only a breadth of exposure but a depth of understanding in one or more particular topics. He writes, “They [case studies] permit you to build knowledge in various management subjects by dealing selectively and intensively with problems in each field.” Every church hiring decision-maker can grow in his ability to hire better and the case study method allows that learning process to continue without being there in person or interviewing the key players.

Certainly, however, the case study method is not perfect or foolproof. In fact, Yin highlights one of the greatest prejudices regarding case studies, “Perhaps the greatest concern has been over the lack of rigor of case study research.” Though this project is seeking qualitative links and results, rather than quantitative ones, effort will be made to avoid pitfalls that diminish any project’s validity and reliability. To this end, multiple sources of evidence, such as documents and interviews, will be gathered whenever possible when collecting data. As well, two case studies will be prepared in order to run this “qualitative experiment” on linkages in two distinct and unrelated situations rather than just once, believing this will only add credibility to the conclusions. And finally using the “pattern matching” technique, comparing a predicted pattern to an empirical

240 Ibid.
241 Ibid.
243 Ibid., 41. Yin lists ways to enhance the construct, internal and external validities as well as the reliability of the study in general by using certain tactics throughout the research process.
244 Ibid., 142.
one, will be used as the key data analysis strategy. In other words, a biblically-derived “ideal” hiring process template will be prepared and compared with the outcomes of the two case studies looking for areas of overlap between the collected data and the theoretical or predicted process.

**Research Design and Vetting Subject Churches**

Yin cautions against a lack or rigor in any case study project. He then recommends explaining a study’s methodological path to its readers to gain added clarity. To this end, this research project’s strategy will be explained in the following pages.

**Literature Review Strategy**

As will be seen in the Data Analysis Strategy section, “pattern matching” will be the analytical technique of choice. Regarding this method, Yin writes,

> For case study analysis, one of the most desirable techniques is to use a pattern-matching logic. Such a logic (Trochim, 1989) compares an empirically based pattern with a predicted one (or with several alternative predictions). If the patterns coincide, the results can help a case study to strengthen its *internal validity.*

Thus, pattern matching requires establishing a baseline hiring process that thoroughly addresses, prioritizes and supplements non-negotiable biblical principles with best marketplace practices in a “how to” sequence of events. This idealized pattern then

---

245 Ibid., 136.
246 Ibid., 3.
247 Ibid., 136. Italics his.
248 The tacit but by no means tenuous assumption here is that God will honor a process that strives to accurately reflect His character and His Word. Hiring according to the patterns and pictures revealed in His Word is surely the safest and firmest ground on which church hiring decision-makers can stand.
becomes the predictive baseline that may be compared with the empirically collected data from each subject church.

To this end, Chapter 2 concluded by articulating four biblically-grounded resolutions supplemented by best practices from the marketplace and the church. The final construct, Figure 1, has now become the idealized, biblical hiring process template that addresses and inter-relates both biblical prescriptions and best marketplace practices. It also reflects and incorporates the twin hypotheses of this project, emphasizing prayer and best practices in the process as well. Therefore, because this template has been derived from the Scriptures and supplemented by best marketplace and church practices, it is predicted to be the ideal pattern for hiring right fit pastors. And it will be against this pattern that each of the two subject church’s hiring processes will be qualitatively compared.

To summarize, the literature review strategy was to develop an idealized, predicted right fit hiring process grounded in the Scriptures and supplemented by best hiring practices from the marketplace and church.

Data Collection Strategy

The literature review developed the predicted pattern for hiring. The case studies will then articulate the empirical hiring processes of two qualified churches. Therefore, two large churches must be selected that have each demonstrated a decades-long track record of fulfilling their stated church vision. It has been theorized that these churches have learned to repeatedly hire well thus, at least in part, explaining how they have achieved longer-term performance. Therefore, two large, Protestant churches who meet at least two of the three of Jim Collins’ “greatness” criteria for the social sector will be selected for study. Further, any potential subject church must be accessible to this investigator, and one of its executive-level hiring decision-makers must be willing to do a candid personal interview. In short, this study is looking to gain access to “great”
churches to explore and understand how they have learned to repeatedly hire right fit pastors.

Collins’ explains his three “greatness” criteria in the following way,

Greatness does not equal bigness. Big is not great and great is not big. In fact, the bigger you become the harder it may be to remain great. For my purposes and organization must have three things to qualify as great:

(1) Superior performance relative to its mission in the world;
(2) A distinctive impact on its community. So you’d say, ‘If this church disappeared, it would leave a serious hole in this community; and
(3) Endurance. Making an impact over a long enough time, so that it’s not dependent on the personality of one leader. If a church is effective during one pastorate, it may be a church with a stellar pastor, but it is not yet a great church.\(^{249}\)

Thus, each candidate church must “pass” in two of the three criteria above to be considered for a case study in this project. Two such churches have been identified:

Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock, Arkansas and Willow Creek Community Church of South Barrington, Illinois. Becoming vetted for this study is described next.

**Fellowship Bible Church, Little Rock, Arkansas**

Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock did not begin as a so-called “great” church. In fact, it had very humble beginnings as its website succinctly communicates,

It was the 1960’s at the University of Arkansas when God hooked up a small group of students – Robert Lewis, Bill Wellons, Dennis Rainey, Barbara Peterson, Debbie Brasher, Mike Boschetti, John Rees, Starr Chenault, Carolyn Williams, Bill Carter, Sally Fontaine, Caroline Meyer, Shirley Price, Susie Wilson – none of whom had given much thought to God or his plan for their lives.

By 1977, 18 individuals began meeting in each other’s homes to discuss Don Meredith’s vision of starting a new kind of church. Using Fellowship Bible Church in the Dallas area as a model, and the worship and teaching styles they’d experienced at University Baptist in Fayetteville, Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock opened its doors on August 21, 1977. Fifty-nine people attended its first service, which was led by Dennis Rainey at the Anthony School.

\(^{249}\) Author, “The Good to Great Pastor: An Interview with Jim Collins,” *Leadership* 2006, 48-9. This is an application of his three criteria for greatness for the social sector.
Attendance increased so much in its first 10 years that the church had to move three times, first to Pulaski Academy (1980), then to Breckenridge Theatre (1983), and finally to what is now the Special Events Center (1985).

Yet the church’s second core value – Growth – has nothing to do with church size, but everything to do with its members’ love relationship with Jesus Christ. This fellowship, so it seemed, needed a growing vision in order to capture, inspire and mobilize its growing congregation.

And so from these humble beginnings its mission, stated today as “Reach – Build – Release,” emerged and forever changed the fellowship. Again, its website states,

A defining moment for this kind of growth [developing a deepening love relationship with Jesus Christ] hit in the fall of 1983 during the first State-of-the-Church address when Robert Lewis [FBCLR directional leader from 1980-2003] unveiled a new definition for Fellowship, calling it an equipping church. ‘Without practically-attractive, spiritually-compelling, proof-positive lifestyles, what good are our claims and pronouncements about a life-changing God?’ wrote Lewis. ‘If we can’t outlive the world at every point – in our marriages, with our children, at work, with money, in our relationships, in the use of our time – why dare to speak of salvation and the abundant life?’

As the Holy Spirit radically transformed the lives of members, more people were drawn to Fellowship. In fact, just three years after the church’s first worship center was completed, FBC moved to three Sunday services (1988), then to a larger temporary worship center (1995), then to the current worship center (1996), back to three services once again (2001), and finally returning in 2003 to two services – but with the exciting new twist of multiple worship venues supported by advanced video technology.

Thus it seems Fellowship’s performance relative to its mission statement, Collins’ first “greatness” criterion, has been consistently up-and-to-the-right. But, as the website

---


continues, “the church’s most revolutionary moment was yet to come.” In fact, this “ah ha” moment would mobilize Fellowship into the Little Rock community in unprecedented ways.

In late 1996, at a staff leadership retreat, the question was posed: ‘Is our community really being changed?’ In the discussion that followed, someone read Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:16, ‘Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.’ This big idea of ‘irresistible influence’ – now known simply as ‘i²’ – was introduced during the 1997 State-of-the-Church address, and its impact has been astonishing not just in Little Rock, but around the world. In its first year, over 400 people were trained to share the gospel through One-to-One. Men’s Fraternity grew to a citywide outreach (1998). ShareFest began (1999) with support from over 100 area churches who were willing to cross denominational and cultural lines and give back to the community as one voice for Jesus Christ. Other communities have followed Little Rock’s lead, hosting their own versions of ShareFest in areas such as Texarkana (AR/TX), Tuscaloosa (AL), and Phoenix (AZ).²⁵³

And it would seem that Fellowship has even spawned a movement of other churches stepping out as the hands and feet of Christ in their respective communities. A neighboring church in Conway, Arkansas, has in fact replicated the ShareFest concept in his church’s town after seeing its impact on Little Rock.

‘I think there’s some satisfaction that’s gained by serving other people with no strings attached,’ said Dr. Quentin Washipack of Conway. ‘There’s a sense of accomplishment, a sense of serving.’

Washipack, 48, has helped organize ShareFest since its inception in Conway in 2001. He said he saw what ShareFest had accomplished in Little Rock and believed the Conway community would benefit from a similar program. After meeting with Ray Williams and Paul Stevens of Fellowship Bible Church, which leads Little Rock’s ShareFest each year, Washipack helped a group of Conway churches and organizations hold an event of the city’s own.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Author, Ibid.(accessed).
Clearly, if Fellowship were to be removed from their community there would be a significant absence of “good works” in Little Rock and elsewhere, meeting Collins’ second criterion for “greatness” of making an impact on the community.

At the present time, Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock has its own association of churches called Fellowship Associates (1999); it has exposed over 1,000 church pastors and lay leaders to the concept and implementation of becoming more influential in their communities through the “Church of Irresistible Influence conference” (2001); and has extended its outreach into other communities through two church plants in Benton and Cabot.  

As this brief history reveals, Fellowship has consistently performed well relative to its stated mission of “Reach, Build, Release” (1) by “Reaching” or expanding the size of the congregation and (2) by “Building” or facilitating both the expectation and experience of spiritual life change within its people. Regarding making a distinctive impact on its community, Collins’ second criterion, with ShareFest and other similar programs Fellowship has left an indelible mark on their community such that if they withdrew from their community tomorrow it would be felt. Thirdly, they have maintained a level of high-quality endurance for the past seven years, Collins’ third “greatness” criterion, with the advent of Tim Lundy assuming the directional leadership of Fellowship from Robert Lewis in 2003.

Fellowship “passes” all three of Collins’ criteria, and so for the purposes of this project Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock is a “great” church. Further, if what Collins asserts that “the bigger you become the harder it may be to remain great” is true, then hiring well for Fellowship must have increasingly become a strategic core

255 Author, History(accessed).

competency at the executive level for maintaining and/or increasing its spiritual momentum as the Lord brings it increase.

Therefore, an interview was requested and conducted over the telephone with Ken Dean, Executive Pastor of Fellowship, on 17 July 2007 for approximately 85 minutes. The interview strategy focused on asking conversational questions designed to allow Mr. Dean to candidly reveal the actual process Fellowship uses to hire new pastoral staff. Appendix D contains a list of potential questions that could have been asked depending on the direction of the conversation. Leading questions that were extremely relevant to the linkages of this project, such as "Do you pray for God to direct you to the best candidate?" were avoided as much as possible.

Instead, the conversation was allowed to unfold naturally through the general outline of the four resolutions from Chapter 2, though this strategy remained invisible to Mr. Dean.\textsuperscript{257} It was hoped that by conducting the interview in such a fashion that perceived linkages for the long-term success of their hiring process would be surfaced by Mr. Dean himself rather than being more artificially drawn out through the interview process. And such was the case as will be seen in the Chapter 4. Documents relative to their hiring process, such as policies, forms or templates were requested and provided by Mr. Dean and have been included in Appendix F.

A follow-up interview was also conducted by telephone on 11 October 2007 for approximately 45 minutes to clarify and go deeper on a few of Mr. Dean’s previous answers in order to finalize the case. Mr. Dean was also sent a copy of the final draft of the case for his review, but did not respond.

\textsuperscript{257} Full transcripts of the interviews with Mr. Dean, used with permission, may be found in Appendix E.
Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois

Willow, as it is called by insiders, also meets the requirements for this project as its own materials will reveal. Willow’s mission in the world is stated on its website as follows: “The mission of Willow Creek Community Church is to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.” That has been the mission since the founding of the church:

The genesis of Willow Creek goes back to the early 1970s, when a dynamic youth ministry was created at South Park Church in Park Ridge.

Using contemporary music, drama, and Bible teaching that was highly relevant to the lives of high school students, the services grew from a handful of teenagers to 1,000 students a night. Nobody was more surprised — or inspired — by the response than the young leaders of the ministry, including a recent college graduate named Bill Hybels. Later, they felt compelled to offer this innovative and creative style of service to an adult audience.

Thus began a new ministry with high-energy, creativity and a bent toward relevance for its audience that blossomed from a student ministry into a growing young church.

Renting a Palatine movie theater (from which the name Willow Creek was taken), they launched the church with great optimism on October 12, 1975 — only to be disappointed by the initial turnout of 125 people. Even worse, attendance sank the next week. But they persisted and people began to respond. In three years, attendance grew to 2,000 people. Faced with standing-room-only crowds, the highly motivated congregation rallied in 1977 to buy 90 acres of farmland in South Barrington.

The first service in the main auditorium was held in February of 1981 — and growth has continued ever since. Nearly one hundred ministries have been launched to serve spiritual, physical, and relational needs. In 1988, the education wing was opened. One Saturday service was added, then another. Later, the building was doubled in size and the property was expanded to 155 acres.

---

258 Author, What We Believe (Willow Creek Community Church, 2008, accessed June 30, 2008); available from http://www.willowcreek.org/what_we_believe1.asp.

259 Author, History of Willow Creek Community Church (Willow Creek Community Church, 2008, accessed June 30, 2008); available from http://www.willowcreek.org/history1.asp.
From the beginning, however, the founders' goal was not to become a big church, but to be the church to each other and the community. Authentic relationships have always been stressed, with small groups offering opportunities for people to develop spiritually while building life-long friendships. Through it all, God has changed thousands of lives and eternities, prompting Bill Hybels to reflect recently, “I've come to believe more deeply than ever that the local church is the hope of the world.”

Growth continued for Willow Creek, leading them to open their 7,500-seat auditorium in 2004 which they use for three services each weekend.

Yet Willow Creek knows all too well that bigness alone does not equal greatness. In 2007’s Reveal Willow scrutinized its own performance relative to its stated mission in the world and made the following observations regarding its own people’s spiritual growth:

Attendance numbers help you determine if people like what you are doing. If they like what’s happening, they choose to participate. (Conversely, if they don’t like what’s happening, they choose not to participate.) Maybe they like the music, or perhaps they appreciate how you are helping their children. Maybe they are making new friends. Perhaps they appreciate the opportunities provided to help others. The hope is that whatever draws them in helps them to experience the transforming power of God and as a result to grow spiritually.

But the bottom line is that attendance numbers alone will never provide the information we need in order to know conclusively that church activities are really helping people grow. Attendance is one measure that something is working, but it is not the whole story.

To press deeper into the trying to measure spiritual growth and maturity that is so often intangible, qualitative and difficult to measure, they conducted a congregational survey.

We did our first research [regarding spiritual growth] in 1992 and have continued to survey our entire congregation every three years or so to learn all sorts of things. We want to know why people come to our church in the first place. We want to know which programs and activities they are involved in. We want to know where they live so we can figure out our impact in the various communities around the church.


261 G.L. Hawkins, Cally Parkinson, and Eric Arnson, Reveal (Chicago: Willow Creek Community Church, 2007), 13-4.
Over the years, the insights from these surveys have shaped—and reshaped—our thinking, directly influencing our plans. For example, in 1995 we discovered that one-third of our congregation drove more than thirty minutes to attend our services. We learned that these people were not inviting their unchurched neighbors and friends to services, nor where they significantly involved in other strategic ministries. Basically, we discovered that more than 30 percent of our congregation did not participate in our mission of turning irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{262}

While the subjectivity of its congregant’s answers is acknowledged in the book, Willow’s determination and perseverance to get below the surface of attendance alone regarding spiritual growth separates them from most other churches.

Such rigorous investigation coupled with an internal culture that was willing to rethink everything it thought it knew about how to do church led Willow to six conclusions, also described in \textit{Reveal},

We made six key discoveries based on the [research] data, starting with one that really caught us off guard.

1. Involvement in church activities does not predict or drive long-term spiritual growth. But there is a ‘spiritual continuum’ that is very predictive and powerful. (p. 33)

2. Spiritual growth is all about increasing relational closeness to Jesus Christ. (p. 38)

3. The church is most important in the early stages of spiritual growth. Its role then shifts from being the primary influence to a secondary influence. (p. 41)

4. Personal spiritual practices are the building blocks for a Christ-centered life. (p. 44)

5. A church’s most active evangelists, volunteers and donors come from the most spiritually advanced segments. (p. 45)

6. More than 25 percent of those surveyed described themselves as spiritually “stalled” or “dissatisfied” with the role of the church in their spiritual growth.\textsuperscript{263}

To summarize a very long and in-depth process, Willow Creek has gone to great lengths to discover how its people are growing spiritually and fulfilling their stated mission. But as a church, it doesn’t end there as just another completed analysis. They

\textsuperscript{262} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., 33-47.
have coupled the results of their discovery process with a “do whatever it takes” mentality — even to the point of reconsidering long-held convictions about how people should grow spiritually and making the necessary changes to programming and personnel. These things strongly suggest that this church is passionate and committed to fulfilling its stated mission in the world and will not be satisfied until they have a track record of doing it with excellence. It seems evident from this brief survey of its own literature that Jim Collins’ first criteria “superior performance relative to its mission in the world” is being achieved at Willow Creek.

Regarding Collins’ second criteria, making an impact in the community, just a sample listing of Willow’s ministries in its community is dizzying. They offer literally hundreds of ministry opportunities. The following are virtually all outwardly-focused, helping their people be the hands and feet of Christ in a hurting and broken world,

(1) 12-Step Program – A Christian 12-step recovery program from addictions
(2) CARS Ministry – putting new life into a gently used car in order to change someone’s life who is without transportation
(3) Ministry to Hispanics, Chinese, Germans, Japanese, Filipinos, etc.
(4) Disaster Response ministry
(5) English as a Second Language ministry
(6) Food Pantry
(7) LifeWork Transitions ministry – to help those contemplating or undergoing career changes
(8) Medical Ministry
(9) Sports Ministry
(10) Van Gogh’s Ministry – a 9-week course for families affected by mental illness264

Willow has also addressed deeper national-level social issues both from the pulpit and in ministry programming. For example, on the topic of racial reconciliation, dated January 2008, a Willow Creek press release says:

Kicking off the series Big Questions Our World Must Answer with the message “Can We All Get Along,” pastors of two of Chicago’s largest churches will explore avenues of racial reconciliation. While this series launches just before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the message says both churches are committed to build relational bridges between races. Hybels and Meeks will challenge the congregation at a time when we honor Dr. King, the man who believed that we can get along. “We don’t just talk about it,” said Hybels. “We walk the walk—and we are doing it together.”

Willow also moved vigorously into the overseas disaster in Myanmar earlier in the spring of 2008, as another press release states,

In response to the deadly cyclone that hit Myanmar on May 2-3, Willow Creek will provide a gift of nearly $125,000 toward relief efforts.

In partnership with World Vision (worldvision.org), Willow will donate $100,000 to supply rice, beans and cooking oil for 3,600 families. Another $23,500 will be given to Water Missions International (watermissions.org) to purchase a solar-powered water filtration system capable of purifying 10,000 gallons of water per day.

The money comes from a disaster relief fund which the church established in 2005 after the deadly tsunami in the Pacific. The church set up the fund in order to be prepared to respond quickly to tragedies such as this.

Willow Creek has also stepped into their own community as the hands and feet of Christ to help the poor and needy, as yet another press release states:

In previous years, the Celebration of Hope initiative has:
--shipped eighteen 40-foot shipping containers filled with clothing, computers, tools, and household goods to people in the Dominican Republic, Chile, Angola, and the inner city of Chicago
--sent four thousand backpacks full of health supplies to caregivers in Malawi, Africa
--provided 13,000 Hope Packs filled with mosquito netting, toiletries, toys, books, and tee shirts to orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia.

---


And this list is by no means exhaustive. In fact, these are just a few of the ways Willow Creek is investing outside its own walls. Clearly, if Willow were to be suddenly and immediately removed from existence the impact within its circles of influence – its communities, the nation and the world – would definitely be felt. These efforts again strongly suggest that Collins’ second criterion for greatness has and is being fulfilled at Willow, leaving “a distinctive impact on its community.”

The first two of Collins’ criteria for North American non-profit greatness have been and are being met by Willow Creek Community Church. Collins states his third and final criterion for greatness as follows, “Endurance. Making an impact over a long enough time, so that it’s not dependent on the person or the personality of one leader. If a church is effective during one pastorate, it may be a church with a stellar pastor, but it is not yet a great church.”

As of this writing Bill Hybels, the founding and senior pastor of Willow Creek, is still at the helm. From the brief survey we have made above, we might also label him both a stellar leader and pastor. However, only time will tell as to whether or not Willow maintains its spiritual trajectory and momentum when the time comes to hand over this key leadership role to another Senior Pastor. The time is approaching when Willow Creek will make this transition, but with all objectivity the jury must remain out. Even after 33 years, it is too early in Willow’s history to be called fully “great” according to Collins’ three criteria.

Willow Creek “passes” in two of the three “greatness” check boxes required by Collins. More specifically, it has certainly facilitated both the expectation and experience of spiritual life change within its own walls, and by its own assessment continues to strive for greater and greater excellence in this area through Reveal, perhaps better than any church of which this investigator is aware. Furthermore, by listing just a

268 Author, “The Good to Great Pastor: An Interview with Jim Collins,” 49.
sample of the outwardly-focused ministries that Willow Creek leads, its impact on its community, Criterion 2, should be beyond doubt; it qualifies as a “great” church.

The sole reason for being “borderline great” at the present time results from Collins’ third criterion being unfulfilled – making the transition to another Senior Pastor without losing momentum. This deficit, however, might be more of a qualified one. Under Hybel’s leadership four additional satellite churches around the Chicago area have been planted. Each of these churches has its own leadership team, which in itself is no small feat. Also, spinning off of the Willow Creek Association with its own leadership team might be factored in as well. Five large, well-run organizations begin to speak to a demonstrated track record of identifying and deploying solid leadership that navigate successfully into the future. Such a track record argues strongly that a transition to another senior leader in the future may perhaps slow but not stall the spiritual momentum of Willow Creek Community Church. But while the pencil seems poised to check the final box we must at present technically define Willow as a “borderline great” church. However, for the purposes of this project Willow Creek, meeting two of three “greatness” criteria as it does, will be designated a “great” church.

Therefore an interview was requested and conducted by telephone with Rob Shearer, Staff Manager of Human Resources, on 3 June 2008 for approximately 30 minutes and then again on 5 June 2008 for an additional 70 minutes. As with Mr. Dean at Fellowship, the interview strategy focused on asking conversational questions designed to allow Mr. Shearer to candidly reveal the actual process Willow uses to hire new pastoral staff. Appendix D contains a list of those questions that could have been asked depending on the direction of the conversation. Leading questions that were extremely relevant to this project, such as "Do you pray for God to direct you to the best candidate?" were avoided as much as possible.

Rather, the conversation was allowed to unfold naturally through the general outline of the four resolutions from Chapter 2, though this strategy remained invisible to
Mr. Shearer.\footnote{269} It was hoped that by conducting the interview in such a fashion that perceived linkages for the long-term success of their hiring process would be surfaced by Mr. Shearer himself. And such was the case as will be seen in Chapter 4. Documents relative to their hiring process, such as policies, forms or templates were requested, but this investigator was told they either did not exist in such a formal fashion or they were not able to be shared. One document, the online application, has been included for reference in Appendix J.

A follow-up interview was also conducted by telephone on 23 September 2008 for approximately 30 minutes to clarify and go deeper on a few of Mr. Shearer’s previous answers in order to finalize the case. Mr. Shearer was also sent a copy of the final draft of the case for his review, but did not respond.

Both churches, Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock and Willow Creek Community Church of South Barrington, are “great” churches for the purposes of this project. And as “great” churches they have demonstrated a high level of spiritual momentum for more than 15 years each, as Jim Collins’ “good to great” definition requires.\footnote{270} It is assumed, as this project has theorized, that these two churches have learned how to hire well in order to achieve this kind of longer-term spiritual trajectory. Otherwise there could not be the sustained, longer-term evidence of vision accomplishment as, most certainly, some pastoral staff have departed while others certainly have come aboard during these past couple of decades.

\footnote{269} Full transcripts of the interviews with Mr. Shearer, used with permission, may be found in Appendix I.

\footnote{270} Collins, \textit{Good to Great}, 6.
Data Analysis Strategy

As stated earlier, a pattern-matching logic will be used as the key data analysis strategy for this project. The chain of evidence that will support this strategy is as follows. The hiring process derived from the Scriptures and supplemented by best marketplace and church best practices from Chapter 2 is assumed herein to be the predicted or ideal hiring process, meaning if it were followed ideally repeated right fit hires would be the result. As such a prediction then, it will form the baseline pattern against which each of the hiring processes from the subject churches will be compared. It is further assumed that this baseline process adequately incorporates and reflects the two hypotheses of this project, namely an emphasis on prayer and using best practices. Finally, it is assumed that if one or both of the subject church’s hiring processes virtually coincide with the idealized process that the propositions of this project will be qualitatively shown to be true.

It is also assumed that the replication logic of using two distinct and unrelated cases will be a strong additional support for any generalizations deduced from the results of this project. Yin writes, “To begin with, even with two cases, you have the possibility of direct replication. Analytic conclusions independently arising from two cases, as with two experiments, will be more powerful than those coming from a single case (or single experiment) alone.” If replication occurs, it should bring added confidence to a broader spectrum of churches who might desire to improve their hiring process by adopting this idealized right fit hiring process.

---

271 Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 136.
272 Ibid., 122.
273 Ibid., 61.
Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter has reviewed the assumptions, methods and strategies for accomplishing this applied research project per the requirements and advice of author and expert Robert Yin.

Two key assumptions have been made in this project. First, it has been assumed that any church that has a decades-long track record of fulfilling its stated vision must have learned to hire well – to repeatedly recruit the right pastors with the right gifts and talents and place them in the right leadership roles. This is in accordance with McIntosh and Collins’ observation on the impact hiring has on the future level of vision accomplishment. Further, this assumption has led to using Jim Collins’ three criteria for “greatness” in the North American non-profit sector as the benchmark any subject church would have to meet in order to qualify for study. Based on this requirement, two churches were selected and vetted for this project, Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock, Arkansas and Willow Creek Community Church of South Barrington, Illinois. These are “great” churches for the purpose of this project.

The second key assumption is that the hiring process derived from the Scriptures in Chapter 2 and expressed in Table 1, reflects a God-honoring “ideal” pattern that incorporates both of this project’s hypotheses – depending on both prayer and best practices. The implication from this assumption is that if followed prayerfully and thoroughly this idealized process should repeatedly yield more right fit pastors than using the common and conventional hiring process with which most church hiring decision-makers today are familiar. And as has been shown, this process forms the baseline process needed to support the pattern-matching logic for the data analysis phase. Discovering “how” a “great” church hires its pastors is of primary interest to this study.

To that end, the case study method has been selected as the research vehicle for investigating this “how” question. In fact, two case studies were prepared, one for each of the “great” churches in order to increase the opportunity for direct replication.
And whenever possible, multiple forms of evidence were sought out in order to corroborate statements made by each church about itself or made by each interviewer regarding the church’s hiring process.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, describes and comments on the actual interviews with Mr. Dean and Mr. Shearer while the results of the two case studies, first for Fellowship Bible Church, and second for Willow Creek Community Church, can be found in Appendixes H and K respectively.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Two case studies on the pastoral hiring processes of so-called “great” churches were prepared for this project: (1) Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock, Arkansas; and (2) Willow Creek Community Church of South Barrington, Illinois. In each case an experienced, executive-level hiring decision-maker was interviewed regarding how his respective church went about hiring new pastors for its staff. Both church’s processes followed the generalized hiring pathway illustrated in Figure 1 below.

![Figure 1 – A Generalized Three-Step Pastoral Hiring Process](image)

And both churches were evaluated for conformity with the predicted hiring pattern, Table 1, according to the scorecard presented at the end of Chapter 2 and reiterated at the top left-hand side of the same table. While both church’s processes were different, as would be expected, there was also a surprising degree of similarity.

\[^{274}\text{See Chapter 3 for an explanation of what it means to be a “great” church for the purposes of this project.}\]
The results of each case study therefore will be presented in the following manner: for each of the three distinct steps of the generalized process (1) the case will be allowed to unfold through the words of the interviewee accompanied by a running commentary of the investigator; then following this, (2) a comparison will be made between the portion of the generalized hiring process just described and the “ideal” biblical pattern it overlaps. This two-step process, description followed by analysis, will be followed for each of the three steps in the generalized hiring process. Finally, at the conclusion of each case, qualitative analysis will be offered regarding the validity of this project’s two hypotheses as seen within the context of a “great” church’s hiring process.

**Case Study 1: Fellowship Bible Church**

This case was conducted over the telephone with Mr. Ken Dean, then Executive Pastor of Fellowship Bible Church, Little Rock, Arkansas on 19 July and 11 October 2007. It is presented as it flowed from the interview sessions, interrupted only at the natural breaks between each of the three steps in the generalized hiring process, or part way through Step 2 as it is a particularly long section.

From the “big picture” level and mindful of what has already been presented relative to Jim Collins’ three greatness criteria one would expect Fellowship’s pastoral hiring process to be prayerful, robust, disciplined and rigorous. This is indeed the case. Generally speaking, Dean says, “…it’s probably a part of our [Fellowship’s] DNA to be thorough and try to evaluate...[a candidate’s] life, work and spiritual experiences.” Just a brief review of Fellowship’s hiring procedure and related documentation supplied by Mr. Dean and found in Appendix F will attest to their desire to “get it right.” Overall, Dean has estimated that for a pastoral or other executive level hire some 50-80 man-hours are invested in their process from start to finish, while for entry-level positions 15-20

---

hours might be more the norm. And while this project’s scope is limited to hiring pastoral staff, of course, much of the process described below could also apply for hiring administrative staff.\textsuperscript{276}

\textit{Step 1: Preparation and Approval}

The first step in Fellowship’s hiring process is an internal one used to prepare the documents needed for initiating the hiring process.

\textbf{Case Description and Commentary}

The first step in Fellowship’s hiring process is an internally conducted phase called “Preparation and Approval.” From interviewing Dean, this first phase of the hiring process establishes the true need for an additional staff member, based on objective criteria, church and/or departmental need and research rather than simply on a staff member’s “felt need.” Appendix F shows a sample “Hiring Request” form required to initiate the process.

Once the research has been properly conducted, the new position justified, approval has been secured from the appropriate supervisor and funding has been established by the Finance Department, a “Position Focus Sheet” or “PFS” (Appendix F) is created by the candidate’s direct supervisor. Input may also be received from other staff members on an as-needed basis. If the new hire is filling an already justified but vacant position the justification step is bypassed and the former PFS is modified as needed and approved. This finalized but as-yet preliminary PFS is then sent to the Human Resources department to be bundled with a standard interview packet. Such constitutes the paperwork required to open a pastoral search. At the present time, Fellowship has a

\textsuperscript{276} Sample documents for hiring an Administrative Assistant have also been included in Appendix D.
Human Resources department staffed with one full-time and one half-time employee to process, among other things, these hiring applications.

This time spent in preparation is not merely the bureaucratic make-work of a large organization. Quite the contrary, in fact, according to Dean there are two big keys to hiring the right person\textsuperscript{277}. And the first of these big keys is preparing a well-done Position Focus Sheet. (By way of interest, the final PFS used to hire Dean can be found in Appendix F). He believes a well-done PFS should clearly and simply communicate the key roles, relationships, values and priorities required by the position as indicated in the example. Further, he feels anything longer than two pages might be too long for many temperament types, so he stresses a goal of one page believing that if it goes to another half page that is still acceptable. Dean would undoubtedly agree with the KISS principle – keep it short and sweet – and also want hiring decision-makers to use plain, everyday language in order to best communicate with those not familiar with a church’s ministry language or internal “buzz” words.

Dean also expresses concern over a PFS or similar kind of job description that is prepared by a committee instead of the direct supervisor. “Your typical recruiting tool [as opposed to our PFS] is developed by a committee. Everything starts with a jump ball,” says Dean, “There isn’t a filter for anything that doesn’t need to be in there, so it’s just a collection of everything and the kitchen sink.”\textsuperscript{278} He adamantly believes the direct supervisor should take the lead and be primarily responsible for determining and defining the PFS, not Human Resources. He also notes that the purpose behind putting the hours next to key tasks on the PFS is to help the candidate understand where his time priorities should lie, again striving clearly to communicate as many expectations as possible up

\textsuperscript{277} The first big key will be described herein under Step 1 of the hiring process while the second big key will be described under Step 2 below.

\textsuperscript{278} Dean, “Personal Communication.”
This level of preparation is simply Fellowship striving to communicate its expectations as clearly and succinctly as possible up front.

This completed PFS perhaps undergoes some very minor revisions before it receives final approval from the hiring person’s direct supervisor. But once the Hiring Request form and the PFS have been completed and approved, the hiring process can move on to Step 2. However, Step 1, “Preparation and Approval,” is such an important step at Fellowship that the hiring process cannot commence without an approved PFS and Hiring Request.

Comparison with the Pattern

Reflecting on Mr. Dean’s tour through the procedures, documents, preparation and approval processes Fellowship has in place for hiring pastors so far suggests beyond a reasonable doubt that they desire to hire “rightly” and to do it repeatedly. It also seems to be, as Dean stated earlier, part of Fellowship’s DNA to be thorough and to hire well. It actually seems to have become an organizational conviction. His narration, in fact, reveals a great deal of conformity with both Resolutions 1 and 2 from the idealized hiring template.

Resolution 1, “Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction,” is about church decision-makers pre-determining to partner with God through “persistent prayer” and “disciplined patience” in order to put the right man with the right gifts and talents in the open role. It is the spirit of honoring God’s divine design, putting an “eye” where an “eye” is needed in the Body and putting a “foot” where a “foot” is needed. It is the foundational decision to “get it right” for the church staff team. In fact, it expresses a conviction for getting it right.

Regarding “disciplined patience,” Chapter 2 recommends that hiring decision-makers use a number of best practices to see their desire through. The first best practice from the template is to put policies and/or procedures in place in order to slow things
down just enough in order to more accurately and objectively define the desired hiring “target.” As can easily be seen, Fellowship has institutionalized their desire to “get it right” within their procedures, forms and approval processes. A second best practice recommended under Resolution 1 is to require all supervisors to take full ownership for hiring their direct reports. Clearly the PFS preparation process, as described by Dean, requires the full investment of the direct supervisor both to contribute to and to approve the finalized version of the PFS. Without these properly approved documents the hiring process cannot move forward. That is a powerful set of checks and balances that are working together to help Fellowship get it right.

Regarding “persistent prayer,” not much was mentioned by Dean, except for a brief thought or two expressed under Step 2 below during the original case. Interestingly, however, on approximately 8 October 2009, almost two years after the original case study had been completed, Mr. Dean and this investigator had an unplanned mobile phone conversation that could not have been recorded or documented. Yet to the best of the author’s recollection at the time, Mr. Dean called to say that he had become concerned that in the original interview sessions he felt he had way overemphasized Fellowship’s button-downed process and reliance of self-administered instruments and had way underemphasized the role prayer had in making any good hire. He emphasized several times over in that conversation how prayer was and should remain the highest priority in any hiring process. With the addition of Mr. Dean’s follow-up comments, Fellowship’s pastoral hiring process now tracks very closely indeed with Resolution 1.

Fellowship’s process also shows conformity with Resolution 2, “Resolve to define a new team member’s role and minimum degree of fit using the four C criteria…,” This resolution prescribes that decision-makers pre-define their hiring target rather than assuming the first or second “good guy” who comes along will also be a “great fit” for their open role. Dean’s first key to hiring well (a well done PFS) attests to Fellowship’s desire to define the “bull’s eye” ahead of time. Further, while they do not explicitly use
the four C’s on their PFS they do clearly spell out desired outcomes and behavioral expectations such as might be found on a success profile.279

They clearly interview around three of the four C’s, as will be seen in the next section, but they do not use them as the written rubric for defining a “great fit.” Neither does their PFS define the minimum threshold of what is acceptable regarding the key expectations. Perhaps this is because the finalized PFS is distributed to potential candidates and Fellowship does not want to tempt any potential candidate to slant his answers toward the “right answers.” But it must be mentioned that at no point did Dean mention anything about pre-determined and written minimum thresholds of fit though clearly he was able to determine a good fit from a poor one. In this it is suspected that the thresholds are more intuitive, “on the fly” thresholds rather than thresholds written out ahead of time.

Fellowship’s Position Focus Sheet is judged to show significant conformity with a success profile: (1) there is a sense of a mission at the top; (2) there are a few “Unifying Directives” and “Ongoing Responsibilities” that would substitute for 12-month outcomes; and (3) Fellowship’s core values and therefore staff behavioral expectations are specified. A new hire would definitely gain the sense of what “success” looks like 12 months in the future from Fellowship’s PFS. There are two areas, however, where it shows no conformity with a success profile – one is in the lack of defining minimum thresholds for each of the ministry outcomes and/or behavioral expectations and the second is specifying any candidates “measure” of Character, Call, Competence and Compatibility. Overall, however, Fellowship’s PFS is substantially the same as a well-done success profile.

279 Recall the four C’s are Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility, which is also sometimes referred to as Chemistry.
From the interview Mr. Dean also made it very clear that Fellowship indeed does personal interviews as well as uses self-administered instruments to assess a candidate in these four areas. However, they have not written down their desires or minimum thresholds for these four areas on the PFS. Perhaps they have some commonly-held minimums that they understand intuitively but choose not to record them. All things considered, Fellowship very closely meets Resolution 2 bearing in mind that the PFS is supplemented with in-depth inquiry around three of the 4 C criteria. Fellowship may, yet Mr. Dean did not express, that they investigate a man’s calling as part of the hiring process. One might speculate that they do, but since it was not verbalized nor does it appear in print, it will be assumed that they do not. Best practices would as well recommend writing down the minimum thresholds on the outcomes and the 4 C’s so as to maintain the highest level of objectivity and consistency during the data gathering phase as possible.

Fellowship’s process has, so far, shown a great deal of conformity with Resolution 1 and with Resolution 2.

**Step 2: Recruitment and Interview**

Once the appropriate documents have been completed and appropriately reviewed, the hiring process begins to search for God’s man for the role.

**Case Description and Commentary**

Step 2 of Fellowship’s hiring process involves identifying, evaluating and interviewing potential pastoral candidates. This longer and more involved step is called “Recruitment and Interview.” Appendix F contains the cover letter Fellowship sends to its prospective candidates for an open pastoral role. The letter is not only designed to initiate contact but to unambiguously educate the candidate on each successive step of the process, especially managing the candidate’s expectations with the phrase by “mutual agreement.” For Fellowship, the hiring process is a two-way street. In Appendix F, the
step identified therein as “Preliminary” is usually completed over the telephone and/or
the internet while the steps labeled “Prospect” and “Pursuit” require a greater level of
investment of time and money as the candidate must visit the Fellowship campus at least
once, and depending on the level of the position in question, multiple times.

As in other large organizations, the Human Resources department at Fellowship usually conducts the initial interview over the telephone for all potential
candidates. This initial screening looks to remove candidates from the list who do not
possess the required education and/or experience needed to move along any further in the
hiring process. As an example, if an open pastoral position required a Master of Theology
or equivalent seminary degree and a man did not possess that degree, the Human
Resources department would remove that man’s name from the list of “qualified”
candidates. Dean did not hazard a guess as to what percentage of potential candidates are
trimmed at this stage, but thought it was probably large.

Dean commented that Fellowship recruits for pastoral-level positions both
from within the congregation as well as from without it, each in its “season.” They do not
subscribe to the “hire internally or don’t hire at all” philosophy. Rather it would seem
they follow the adage, “form follows function.” They intend to hire for specific roles
and/or outcomes and that is what drives the avenues down which they search. They want
the best person for each position recognizing that sometimes that person is within their
walls, and sometimes is not. They also tap into seminaries and other churches within and
outside of their association as well as using personal and professional networking to find
qualified candidates. As of this writing, however, there is no formal, church application
that a prospective candidate must fill out that might provide personal information and
grant the permissions required allowing Human Resources to perform a preliminary
screen based on illegal activity and/or child sexual abuse.
Comparison with the Pattern

Dean’s description of looking across a wide range of potential candidates for the right one conforms well with Resolution 3, “Resolve to consider only potential team candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required degree of fit.” Clearly from the initial “pass/fail” call Human Resources makes to potential candidates it is looking to pass through only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum requirements Fellowship has established for fit in that particular role. It also conforms well with both recommended best practices of “consider both traditional and non-traditional candidates” and use an “Opportunity Profile.”

Regarding “consider both traditional and non-traditional candidates” Dean indicated that they looked both within and without Fellowship to find the right pastor with the right gifts and talents for their open role. They also pursue seminaries, and personal and professional networks to surface potential candidates as well as undoubtedly seeking referrals from ministry friends and partners. As Dean indicated, Fellowship needs certain ministry outcomes accomplished, therefore they seek out the best potential candidates they can find to fulfill that need. They do not limit themselves to one venue for discovering potential “right fit” candidates. This is the very essence of Resolution 3.

Regarding using an “Opportunity Profile” as a best practice to surface more passive candidates (those pastors who may not be actively or aggressively pursuing a new ministry opportunity but might be open to one should providence present it) Dean never once mentioned pursuing candidates from other churches for Fellowship’s open roles. This is, of course, an argument from silence but in light of the conversation regarding where to find the best candidates it seems odd that if Fellowship pursues this avenue of pastoral “head hunting” it remained a secret practice. If, therefore, they do not pursue pastors already on a sister church’s staff, they would have no need to use the Opportunity Profile. However, placing a detailed job description or a PFS on their website would constitute a form anyway of using an Opportunity Profile.
Overall, Fellowship shows a good level of conformity with Resolution 3. First, they do not limit their candidate searches to one venue or pool, but look into various pools for “God’s man,” including both traditional and non-traditional kinds of candidates. Second, they evidence a selectivity among potential candidates based on the requirements found in the PFS only considering those who at least meet the minimum levels of fit. But not tapping into the passive candidate pool, if indeed they do not, unnecessarily reduces the breadth of their search.

**Case Description and Commentary**

As seen from Step 1 above, the first big key Dean mentioned for hiring well is completing a well-done PFS, or job description. The second big key in hiring “rightly” is focusing on the right person. Despite how it initially sounds, this is not just stating the obvious for Dean. By this he is using a short-hand way of describing an intentional, orchestrated, spiritual discovery process where details about the candidate’s character, his competence or experience in ministry, and his chemistry with the staff and compatibility with the mission and vision of the church are “mined” from both interviews and instruments. To this end Fellowship strives to probe for information from a potential candidate in the big areas of Character, Competence and Chemistry or “fit.”

With respect to discovering a candidate’s Christian character, the process is straightforward and uses personal interviews. Following a brief faith testimony from him, Fellowship’s “Candidate Questions” (see Appendix F) would be covered most likely over the telephone. Any issues or problem areas the interviewer hears or discerns are followed up on with additional questions to gain increased clarity. Particularly troubling and destructive issues in today’s society, such as alcohol, drugs, anger management, internet pornography and moral failures are also addressed in an up-front way during this interview. Dean says all references are checked at this stage, and depending on the position, the spouse may be interviewed as well. He also noted that even though they are
as conscientious and careful as possible, realistically those who desire to intentionally hide or deceive Fellowship are obviously able to do so. No screening or discovery process can eliminate all errors or future staff problems. But without “passing” the character component, the foundation upon which all else is built, no potential candidate will proceed further in the discovery process.

To discover a candidate’s Competence particular attention would be paid to his resume. Because past performance is held to be the best indicator of future performance the interviewer, many times the direct supervisor, would look for a track record of doing what Fellowship needs done from past roles. Some key references may be followed up here if needed to better understand the accomplishments listed on the resume. The previous telephone interview concerning the candidate’s character would naturally and logically flow into a dialog about his ministry history and performance – again with the attitude of discovering what this man has been like and how he has performed in his previous ministry positions, including any more minor things that may have been left off the resume. When and if the time comes for a face-to-face interview the candidate would be asked to provide additional detail on the parts of his education and experiences that would be of particular interest to Fellowship. At Fellowship’s size it is clear that they hire “Specialists” for particular ministry areas not “Generalists.”

It seems fair to summarize Dean that the most elusive aspect of the hiring process is discerning a candidate’s level of organizational and missional chemistry or fit. This component tries to discover if the potential candidate already manifests the necessary DNA not only to fit in with the staff as one of them, but with the preferred ministry direction of Fellowship. Dean uses up to four different on-line instruments to discover the level of fit, acknowledging that it is always a subjective process at best. To say the same thing a different way might be to say that their hiring process is one where science and art coalesce.
Their fit category breaks down into two subcategories, the first of which is called the “Personality Component.” To assess a candidate’s personality, or at least his perception of it, Dean sends him to http://www.discprofile.com (or similar) with a pre-paid code of some variety allowing the candidate to complete the instrument on-line. A thorough explanation of the DiSC theory and an overview of its main components can be found at the website above, while a brief, more colloquial explanation follows from Wikipedia,

DiSC is the four quadrant behavioral model based on the work of William Moulton Marston Ph.D. (1893-1947) to examine the behavior of individuals in their environment or within a specific situation. DiSC looks at behavioral styles and behavioral preferences.

The tests classify four aspects of personality by testing a person's preferences in word associations (compare with Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). DiSC is an acronym for:

- Dominance - relating to control, power and assertiveness
- Influence - relating to social situations and communication
- Steadiness (submission in Marston's time) - relating to patience, persistence, and thoughtfulness
- Conscientiousness (or caution, compliance in Marston's time) - relating to structure and organization

These four dimensions can be grouped in a grid with D and I sharing the top row and representing extroverted aspects of the personality, and C and S below representing introverted aspects. D and C then share the left column and represent task-focused aspects, and I and S share the right column and represent social aspects. In this matrix, the horizontal dimension represents a factor of "Assertive" or "Passive", while the vertical represents "Open" vs. "Guarded."

Certainly paper versions of the DiSC test could be substituted for the on-line test if needed. The results of the on-line assessment are then emailed to the candidate’s direct supervisor and anyone else who might need to review it. Dean indicated that Fellowship

---

uses the DiSC instrument primarily to gain insight into how their candidate normally and naturally engages in interpersonal relationships.

Dean also mentioned how important and helpful he has found two other online instruments to be in his or his staff’s fit discovery process, both being found at www.psychtests.com. The first test is a gauge of a candidate’s resiliency or how “thick skinned” he might be. The second is one on anger management. He believes that used together – the DiSC and the other two instruments from the PsychTests website – these instruments give him some level of insight into his candidate as well as create ideas for follow-up interview questions. He truly believes in the value of these types of instruments. He says, “I can’t tell you how often I’ve seen someone who’s really a sharp, bright person, but they’ve always got these emotional things going on.” As in all church ministry, Fellowship’s ideal candidate must be able to handle the pressure of a public position; they must be resilient; they must relate well to others, have a thick skin and know how to manage their anger in many types of public and private situations.

Besides the Personality Component, Dean also shared how Fellowship tries to discover a candidate’s “Natural Wiring” as the second subcategory of fit. From Dean’s description of natural wiring, it seems that Fellowship tries to tease out and articulate a candidate’s unlearned abilities. Dean went on to indicate that he believed these unlearned abilities cannot or do not change over time. In other words, you are what you are and you will be in the future what you have been in the past. Your past responses to situations are the most likely predictor of how you would behave in the future. Others have said it just a little bit differently, but Dean would say you cannot be anything you want to be. The bottom line of this line of inquiry for Fellowship, however, is this: they are seeking to

---

281 Dean, “Personal Communication.”
discern and distinguish those who are already going in their direction from those who are not or cannot go with them.²⁸²

The first on-line instrument Dean uses to assess natural wiring is StrengthsFinder found at [http://www.strengthsfinder.com](http://www.strengthsfinder.com). The StrengthsFinder website says,

> Based on a 40-year study of human strengths, Gallup created a language of the 34 most common talents and developed the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment to help people discover and describe these talents. In 2001, the initial version of this assessment was included with the bestselling management book *Now, Discover Your Strengths*. The discussion quickly moved beyond the management audience of this book. The goal was to start a global conversation about what's right with people. It appears that the world was ready to have this conversation.

Another website says this regarding the StrengthsFinder theory, helping anchor Dean’s statement above regarding being anything you want to be,

> There is a widespread belief that people can do anything well if they learn enough or try hard enough. Training and development programs that attempt to teach “steps,” “habits,” or “behaviors” ignore the fact that everyone's steps, habits, and behaviors are different -- and should be different if people are to use their natural talents and strengths. This remedial approach [i.e. trying to develop someone’s weaknesses] often produces disappointing results. It rarely, if ever, helps the person achieve excellence, and it wastes training and development dollars.

The second instrument is truly the one Dean says they rely on most to discover a potential candidate’s natural wiring. It is called “Servants By Design” and each potential candidate is issued a pre-paid password in order to log in and complete the approximately hour-long assessment. A fictitious sample “Personal Profile Report” is contained in Appendix G. The Servants By Design website says this,

²⁸² This appears to be an identical or contextualized version of Jim Collins’ “bus” analogy of getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and then getting the right people in the right seats on the bus.
YOU are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” (Psalm 139:13-14) Just imagine how effective you would be if you could discover your one-of-a-kind design authored by God!

Wouldn’t it be awesome if every person could learn to employ their unique design in service to Him and to others?

This is what the Servants By Design™ Inventory is all about.

By completing the Inventory, you will receive a Personal Profile Report that will explain the core strengths of your personality, your talents and abilities in detail. You will discover:

- How you have been wired by God?
- How you go about doing things?
- The lens through which you view life?
- What makes you come alive!

Dean says, “The primary language and the primary instrument we use around here is Servants By Design. We had a couple of doctors in the church who took [an existing instrument] and translated it into a spiritually-oriented language.”

Dean says there is also a one and one-half day training and certification seminar to teach those who will interpret the results what to look for and what the instrument’s evaluation means to the organization and mission of the church. “We rely on it very heavily,” he says and continues “We don’t want to make a hire that changes the DNA [meaning the mission, vision, leadership and operation] of our church.”

When asked about using both Servants and StrengthsFinder, Dean said for him that Servants By Design predicts as much as it describes and articulates the “language” another uses to describe himself and his ministry. Dean indicated that Servants can help him get inside the head a little bit of a candidate to probe a little deeper into how he interprets the world as well as how he sees ministry. And this is also where and how StrengthsFinder plays a role. It articulates 34 unlearned abilities that a candidate


284 Dean, “Personal Communication.”

285 Ibid.
may or may not have, but more importantly provides a common language to describe passions and natural abilities. One suspects Fellowship, with its more diverse hiring needs, has found the need to create a common language not only internally but also with its candidates to minimize confusion and maximize objectivity during the discovery process.

Yet science still gives way to art and intuition at a certain point in the hiring process. “I’m [still] trying to figure out a way to put words to this thing that when you’re with somebody and there’s such a kindred spirit about a broad range of topics that even though you’re coming at it from different experiences, different bents and so on, you trust each other’s judgments in those [many] areas,” says Dean. 286 However, doing the due diligence of using interviews and instruments – the science – helps keep Fellowship from shooting from the intuitive hip and hiring a candidate on impulse rather than by working their process.

At this point, some might feel that Fellowship’s process is too mechanical, too rote, too scientific and too computerized and might perhaps leave out the “art” or the Holy Spirit. What is the spiritual, intuitive side then of their hiring process? Dean addressed this issue by saying that he firmly believes that all people are uniquely created by God and that their hiring process should probably better be called a “spiritual discovery process” where they use the instruments available to discover and measure, at least qualitatively, a candidate’s unique, God-given design.

He indicated they coupled the science with the art of prayerful dependence on God before, during and after each interview whether it was in person or over the telephone. As they move down the process and personal meetings become increasingly important Dean also said the interviewer or small group of interviewers will lay hands on

286 Ibid.
particular candidates – those who will continue as well as those who will not – and pray for God’s blessing on them and their ability to use their unique design in future Kingdom work. Dean noted that all the scientific data gives you is data. It gives you starting places, open doors, and the like for discovering who God has made this person to be and what he brings to the Kingdom table.

**Comparison to the Pattern**

Though somewhat long, Dean has presented an overview of Fellowship’s very thorough pastoral candidate interview process. Therefore, several summary observations may help bring this phase of the hiring process into better focus. First, their process seeks to blend science and art, the objective and the intuitive, the biblical and the marketplace. It seems to strive to meld both together into a unified whole. Second, and to this end, it uses multiple interviews and potentially multiple self-administered instruments in order to compile as well-rounded and objective picture of a candidate’s divine design as possible. Third, Fellowship assesses three of the four C’s (Character, Competence and Compatibility) with the team and the church; absent is any discussion about his sense of calling. And fourth they complete the full hiring process before declaring a match for the role. The ability to take a short cut through this process is minimized, and might even be eliminated through the use of the on-line instruments, especially Servants By Design, and their approval process.

This conforms quite well with Resolution 4, “Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team.” It also conforms well, more specifically, with three of the four recommended best practices from the idealized pattern. First, while Dean did not specify an absolute minimum number of interviews, the shear time involved in completing this process suggests at least two interviews in addition to the first screening interview, making no less than three interviews with at least two being face-to-face. Second, as Dean described above, all
reference checks are completed before the process is concluded. And third, should there be more than one candidate for an open role their interview processes would be conducted in parallel, evaluated, and then the right fit match would be declared.

One lack of conformity with the template is, perhaps, in using a more formal “structured, behavior-based style interviewing format as a data-gathering tool rather than a decision-making tool.” Dean was clear that a pastor’s former track record was, in his opinion, still the best indicator of future performance. That track record is the heart of the structured, behavior-based type of interview, where a candidate is asked repeatedly about what he did and what were the outcomes. But Dean revealed no information about how far back into a candidate’s past they might be looking to anchor this track record, nor did he volunteer any of the questions they might use within such an interview. Nonetheless, Fellowship clearly uses the interviews it conducts and the instruments it uses to gather data on the candidate during this “discovery process.” This candidate data is then compiled and evaluated before a match is made, which is the final best practice for Resolution 4 as will become more obvious under Step 3 below.

**Step 3: Recommendation and the Offer/Hire**

Finally, once one or more legitimate candidates have been surfaced, they complete the final set of placement and on-boarding steps.

**Case Description and Commentary**

Step 3, “Recommendation and the Offer/Hire,” concludes the general schematic of Fellowship’s hiring process. Once the instruments and interviews have been completed and the results have been evaluated, usually by a team, the primary candidate is contacted by their direct supervisor and brought to the campus again for a final, formal interview to discuss the agreed upon PFS, salary and benefits. There is no minimum number of candidates that need to be taken through the process before a decision is made. But Dean said they always expect God to bring them the right person. If the primary
candidate accepts the offered position a start date is established, Human Resources is notified to coordinate the orientation process and Finance has delivered to it the Compensation and Benefit Fact Sheet it needs in order to initiate compensation. As a final step, the completed interview packet, the PFS, the signed approval sheets, etc. are all compiled and put into the candidate’s personnel file in the Human Resources department.

If on the other hand a potential candidate did not make it through to the final cut, he would be sent a letter informing him that the church did not feel the sense of fit it needed in order to bring him on staff at the present time. A good sample rejection letter from another church is included for completeness purposes in Appendix M.

Fellowship clearly has a sense of spiritual trajectory and momentum that propels it toward its future. Therefore, Dean’s primary goal is to hire other pastoral staff who will, as he says, “[make decisions] consistent with the history, the belief systems and the objectives of the organization and where it needs to go in the future.” A disciplined hiring process for Fellowship, in a very real sense, thus guards and preserves the future integrity of the ministry.

Comparison to the Pattern

As Mr. Dean comments no minimum number of candidates is required to be interviewed before a hiring decision is made. However, every candidate who begins the process is taken completely through and evaluated before the final hiring decision is made. There is a high degree of conformity in Fellowship’s practice with the spirit of Resolution 4, “Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team.” As well, specifically with one of the recommended best

---

287 Ibid.
practices of completing all interviews, evaluating, then declaring the final match for the role based on all the available data.

Summary and Bearing on Project Hypotheses

A case study on the hiring process of Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock, Arkansas, has been completed through two solicited and one unsolicited interview with Ken Dean, then Executive Pastor. Overall, this case has revealed a church that not only expresses a conviction for “getting it right” but provides evidence that it does so. In addition, their processes conform exceedingly well with all four resolutions from the idealized pattern. Furthermore, there are documents in Appendix F evidencing Fellowship’s use of many of the recommended best practices from the idealized template. It seems beyond a reasonable doubt that this “great” church has, in part, enjoyed a long track record of achieving its stated mission as a result of institutionalizing its desire to hire right fit pastors through its procedures, forms, instruments and approvals and then executing on it with great effectiveness. Table 2, found in Appendix H, summarizes and compares the results of this case with the predicted right fit pattern.

Hypothesis 1

This project’s first hypothesis is stated as follows: There is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who pray and the church actually fulfilling its vision. Without the unsolicited and supplementary information provided by Mr. Dean in October of 2009 this hypothesis would have to be held somewhat tenuously, until another case could confirm it or refute it. Frankly, though this investigator believes it was genuine, the information offered by Mr. Dean during the course of the original case on prayer was so brief that it could be taken as no more than a platitude that “of course they pray for God to bring them the right candidates.” However, with his unsolicited and supplementary information it is clear that the role of prayer in the hiring process, especially on the part of the hiring decision-makers such as Mr. Dean, is a
vital part of the longer-term effectiveness of Fellowship’s hiring process. There is a legitimate dependence on prayer at Fellowship and as well a legitimate linkage between prayer in their hiring process and hiring well. Therefore, regarding the information revealed through this case, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

**Hypothesis 2**

This project’s second hypothesis is stated as follows: There is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who use best business hiring practices and a church actually fulfilling its vision. Clearly, this case has shown beyond a reasonable doubt that Fellowship not only depends on prayer but also depends on best business practices that facilitate their prayerful desire to hire rightly and do it repeatedly. Fellowship’s apparent success in hiring well over the long run may begin to suggest that the path described by the idealized template is perhaps closer to the mark than further from it.

Fellowship’s conformity to the idealized template is clear. But according to Robert Yin, running an identical qualitative experiment in two distinct and unrelated situations adds credibility to the conclusions of this project.\textsuperscript{288} Therefore, a second case on hiring pastors was prepared in order to surface linkages relevant to this project’s hypotheses with the cooperation of Willow Creek Community Church. This case study was conducted in as similar a manner as possible to the one at Fellowship Bible Church in order to minimize extraneous factors on the conclusions.

**Case Study 2: Willow Creek Community Church**

This case was conducted over the telephone with Mr. Rob Shearer, Staff Manager of Human Resources, at Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington,

\textsuperscript{288} Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 142.
Illinois on 3 June, 5 June and 23 September 2008. It will be presented as it flowed from the interview sessions, interrupted only at the natural breaks between each of the three steps in the hiring process (See Figure 3), or part way through Step 2 as it is a particularly long section.

From what was seen in Chapter 3 regarding the breadth of Willow Creek’s ministry and its staff culture of intentionality, excellence, flexibility and innovation, one might expect their hiring process to be just as intentional and precise; perhaps something akin to hiring at IBM or General Electric. One might expect they would rely on state of the art or best business practices available from leading authors and the Harvard Business School. However, when asked about their overall hiring process Rob Shearer said that it was “very different” when compared to a formal, rigid – perhaps even mechanical – hiring process.289

Shearer has been with Willow for almost 20 years serving in various capacities, but for the last 10 years has been the Staff Manager of Human Resources – guiding, directing and implementing the church’s hiring philosophy as well as doing “frontline” candidate interviews. Just by sheer numbers, Shearer could be considered a hiring expert. He estimates that in his 10-year tenure he has hired “about 60 [staff] per year, so about 600 [people].”290 It is, in fact, a process that has remained fairly consistent, meeting the hiring needs of the church over the past decade.

Willow’s goal is much more formal and measured regarding what they expect a new hire to do once on staff, but their process for identifying that individual is overall much more intuitive or discerning than that found within a corporate culture or arrived at through using best business practices alone. In fact, it might be far more “seat of the pants” than might be expected from an organization numbering almost 600. But Willow

290 Ibid.
is very conscious that the church is much more than just an organization – it is also a Spirit-led, Spirit-driven, living organism. Though requested, Mr. Shearer did not provide any written documentation outlining Willow’s hiring process similar to what was provided from Fellowship. Perhaps it does not exist or is considered proprietary. However, looking back on this case, the overall level of required paperwork appears to be somewhere between minimal and non-existent when compared to a Fellowship Bible Church process. And as with Fellowship, the same three schematic steps exist for Willow’s pastoral hiring process and will be used to present the results of the case study.

**Step 1: Preparation and Approval**

The first step in Fellowship’s hiring process is an internal one used to prepare the documents needed for initiating the hiring process.

**Case Description and Commentary**

There is a story told that future Willow Creek pastors are hired by Bill Hybels, the founding and Senior Pastor of Willow Creek, over his kitchen sink. So the story goes, if the candidate is a servant enough to help clear the table and clean the dishes, he’s hired – end of interview. When asked about this story, Shearer replied, “They’re trying to take a circumstance that occurred and make a practice out of it.” In fact, such an event did occur with one pastoral candidate one time, with a lengthy process already behind them, and it was while doing the dishes that this particular pastor felt God’s confirming call on his heart to move toward Willow. So Hybels did in fact hire him over the kitchen sink! But there was certainly much more to the story. Even though Willow’s hiring process might be called intuitive, it could not be called that intuitive, nor would one kitchen sink conversation constitute the entire process. In fact, while that story may be one method for

---

291 Ibid.
determining a “great guy” it could hardly be said to be able to repeatedly identify a “great fit” for a complex organization and organism such as Willow Creek.

Willow’s hiring process is actually intentional and measured, once the surface appearances are pushed through. Step 1 of their process, “Preparation and Approval,” is the phase that includes the hard, objective preliminary work done before considering whether or not to hire at all. This intentionality begins in the “back room” because that is where global goals and needs can be identified, discussed and determined most objectively. It is in this back room of the Human Resources department where church “needs” are separated from staff “wants,” where needs are identified based on the church’s three near-term goals that Shearer calls the “2010 goals.” The Willow Creek website lists these three goals as, “(1) Raising the level of risk when it comes to reaching out to those who are far from God; (2) Coaching Christ-followers as they pursue full devotion to Christ; and (3) Unleashing unprecedented levels of compassion into our broken world.292

Because they are knowledgeable about the global goals, needs and personnel of the entire church, the Human Resources department becomes the initial gate of a gate keeping process for hiring at Willow. Shearer expresses it this way,

…for example if we’re hiring a pastor for our small groups ministry and through a conference they [another staff member] found an individual they felt very strongly about, and because they’re there at this conference they meet with this person and just become sold that they’re the right person, that’s great, it’s awesome. The next step would be here at HR, then senior leadership then our Elders…. [sooner or later] everyone must pass through me.293

In other words, no ministry department has the unilateral authority to hire if and when it feels the need. Every hire must pass through HR, though certainly the staff is free to


293 Shearer, “Personal Communication.”
express their wish list for new hires to HR. Though not a part of this interview, we have heard this cultural idea expressed at Willow as “open communication yet structured decision-making.”294 Ultimately, when HR determines or agrees that a specific need is going unmet with respect to an identified church goal, Shearer indicated that Human Resources then casts the vision for the need and identifies where and how that new hire would fit into the overall organization. Identifying that new “box” on the organization chart then leads to a written Position Description (PD) also put together by the HR department. If the hire is for a current but open position, the position description is reviewed and updated as necessary.

Shearer said this regarding the written PD, “It’s very traditional and HR-related. [It outlines]…the primary purpose, the responsibilities and then just some general thoughts around their skills, abilities, education and spiritual giftedness.”295 He estimates that approximately 90% of the time a written PD is in place before the interview process began, but also estimates that about 10% of the time a description is crafted in collaboration with an individual they believe God is leading their way. Further, while the Human Resource professionals may collaborate interdepartmentally on any particular description, there is still no formal, independent Search Committee who prepares, interviews and/or makes the recommendation to hire a pastor. Since HR has the privilege of casting the global vision for the position within the organization, it also takes on the responsibility for creating the PD as well as walking it all of the way down the road until the actual hire is made.

Once the basic purposes, responsibilities and goals for the position have been established the HR department next answers the “Where do the resources come from?”

---

294 This is from a previous conversation the author had with an unnamed Willow staff member who said this phrase well-expressed their culture.

295 Shearer, “Personal Communication.”
question. Again, if it is a current but open position that question is already answered. If on the other hand it is a new position, funding will have to be concretely identified before the description is ready to move on to the next step of the process, approval.

Though somewhat informal and potentially subject to some level of refinement, the preliminary PD and its funding source proceed to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. In truth, hiring will not proceed to Step 2, “Recruitment and Interview,” until the Human Resources department receives formal approval from the Senior Leadership Team. This formal approval, Shearer said, is not necessarily a signature on a piece of paper, but is at least a verbal commitment from that Team. He describes the process this way,

We have a lot of different processes around that [approval]. Some are more formal than others…. [Once] the description is created, the resources are designated, where the resources could come from, and the person in leadership who oversees this ministry that is requesting a position would then bring that to the leadership group here and they would decide whether or not to move forward to allocate the resources that have been identified. When they do, they just give a verbal “go forth” and we go forth.296

Once this approval has been received, the Human Resource department commences the search using the approved PD.

Comparison to the Pattern

Mr. Shearer’s recounting of the procedures, documents, preparation and approval cycle Willow has in place for hiring pastors demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that they desire to hire rightly and to do it repeatedly. In fact, Shearer makes it clear that the Elder Board has chartered HR to hire with both excellence and consistency.297 Further, his walkthrough of Willow’s “Preparation and Approval” phase

\[296\] Ibid.

\[297\] This will be seen under Step 2 of the hiring process below.
reveals a good level of conformity with Resolution 1 and slightly less conformity with Resolution 2 from the idealized pattern.

Resolution 1, “Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction,” is about church decision-makers pre-determining to partner with God through “persistent prayer” and “disciplined patience” in order to put the right man with the right gifts and talents in the open role. It is the spirit of honoring God’s divine design, putting an “eye” where an “eye” is needed in the Body and putting a “foot” where a “foot” is needed. It is the not easily swayed conviction to “get it right” for the church staff team.

Regarding “disciplined patience,” Chapter 2 prescribes that hiring decision-makers use a number of best practices to facilitate the realization of their desire. The first best practice from the template is to put policies and/or procedures in place in order to slow down the process just enough to more accurately and objectively describe and define the desired hiring “target.” As has been seen, Willow has certainly institutionalized their desire to get it right within the HR department’s charter, preparation and approval process, as well as through the written PD.

Interestingly, the second best practice recommended under Resolution 1, to require all supervisors to take full ownership for hiring their direct reports, is not followed. Willow instead depends on HR to handhold the basic job description all the way down the hiring road. Perhaps there is such high quality of interdepartmental communication that this system works for them. Or perhaps their staff size or staff culture is a little too “seat of the pants” for anyone but HR to make sure the process is completed with excellence and consistency. In any event this practice is contrary to so called “best practice” and even contrary to the previous case study on Fellowship. Certainly HR is fully competent to prepare an outstanding PD, but without the privilege of seeing a sample job description the level of role-specific thoroughness remains unknown. And the third best practice under Resolution 1, to keep a role open rather than
hiring “almost,” while not revealed as yet in the case is definitely practiced by Willow as will become clear. All in all, Willow exhibits a high level of “disciplined patience” for finding a right fit pastor.

Regarding “persistent prayer,” not much as yet has been explicitly mentioned by Shearer. However from this author’s informed hindsight, prayer has a vital role in Willow’s hiring process. In fact, if Fellowship is caricatured as slanting toward the best practices side of the ledger, the caricature of Willow would slant toward the more intuitive, prayerful leading of the Spirit side of the ledger. Yet this prayerful posture must be compiled from smaller, more numerous and less obvious sound bites rather than from one large statement or conversation. Instead, the reality of prayerfulness oozes from every portion of the conversations with Shearer as more of an attitude or posture. This investigator definitely “caught” the sense of Willow’s dependence on prayer even if it cannot be articulated explicitly in one or two quotations.

Willow’s process also shows conformity of spirit with Resolution 2. The spirit of it, “Resolve to define a new team member’s role and minimum degree of fit using the four C criteria,” is that hiring decision-makers pre-define their hiring “target” rather than assuming from lack of definition that the first or second “good guy” who comes along will also be a “great fit” for their open role. Again, without a sample job description, any greater conformity than one of “in spirit” is purely speculative. Yet the fact that Shearer described the items on that written description, “…the primary purpose, the responsibilities and then just some general thoughts around their skills, abilities, education and spiritual giftedness” suggests that they indeed have prepared a description aiming at the 2010 Willow goals. This is clearly even the spirit of using a success profile.

298 Shearer, “Personal Communication.”
However, this PD is not built around the four C’s, even though as will be seen under hiring Step 2, this is clearly the framework for their interviews. Nor did Shearer describe any thresholds for defining minimum levels of fit with some of their key expectations, though certainly those might exist on an actual PD. Qualitatively speaking, while having a thorough, written PD is clearly better than having no target and no thresholds at all, it nonetheless falls short of a having a higher level of conformity with Resolution 2, as has been seen previously.

Unfortunately, Willow’s Position Description cannot be examined in more detail as it was not provided. Therefore the details of the PD must be imagined from his description. Shearer indicated that the PD basically contained the primary purpose of the role, its responsibilities and some general thoughts about skills, abilities, education and spiritual giftedness. While it may, in fact, be as detailed as Fellowship’s PFS this is not the sense received during the interview. Willow’s PD is certainly aligned with Willow’s 2010 goals, and it is pre-defined and pre-approved, but it seems somewhat less structured, less formal and less detailed than Fellowship’s by way of comparison. And though it is only speculation, there are probably no minimum thresholds put on either the ministry outcomes or on the expected behaviors, similar to the case with Fellowship.

On the other hand, Mr. Shearer made it very clear that Willow thoroughly interviews around all 4 C’s for each candidate and that this was a significant part of the hiring process. Again, while not written down ahead of time it seems, there must nonetheless be agreed upon thresholds in each of the four areas as the interview revealed. Yet without having evidence to the contrary, while Willow’s PD and 4 C interview process are close to Fellowship’s PFS and interview process, Fellowship’s target is qualitatively judged as better defined than Willow’s.

So far, as with Fellowship, Willow’s hiring process has shown solid levels of conformity with Resolution 1, the conviction to keep the hiring objective in line with God’s objective for team. But it seems to conform only in spirit with Resolution 2,
having as it does a pre-determined, written hiring “target” but without the framework of
the four C’s or pre-defined thresholds of fit. This might have to be changed were a
sample PD to become available.

*Step 2: Recruitment and Interview*

Once the appropriate documents have been completed and appropriately
reviewed, the hiring process begins to search for God’s man for the role.

**Case Description and Commentary**

Once Step 1, “Preparation and Approval,” has been completed the hiring
process moves into the lengthy but crucial phase for making a “right fit” hire called
“Recruitment and Interview.” Step 2 of the hiring process involves identifying,
evaluating and interviewing potential candidates with the ultimate responsibility and goal
of recommending God’s candidate to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. Willow
seems to have a sense that hiring well is the very lifeblood of its future so the Elders have
actually chartered the Human Resource department to hire both with excellence and
consistency. It is a mission, Shearer indicated, they have taken fully to heart.

Step 2 then is a process that seeks to discern God’s leading rather than
depending on any kind of self-administered instrument (e.g. the DiSC test, Myers-Briggs,
StrenghtsFinder, etc.) for direction. Thus, the process is done primarily through a series
of interpersonal conversations done with spiritual “antennae” raised to discern God’s
candidate. It is very much a discovery process where the decision-makers believe they
will gain the necessary information needed to take the next step with each candidate
based on one or more of these interviews. Shearer speaks about it this way,

Well, you know it may come to three or four individuals I’d bring to their [the
ministry leader making the hire] attention and say, why don’t you connect with
them, see if they have the right abilities for what you’re looking for, and then you
could see do they mix in well with your team that you’ve built, and [then] from
that they may say yes to one or no to all of them, but take this further with a couple of them.299

From Shearer’s description it is indeed a highly personalized and intuitive discovery process.

The HR department actually begins broadcasting the need for candidates as soon as the PD has been approved. It is made known within the church, and is likely to be posted on their website. And as in other large organizations or churches, Willow begins looking for qualified candidates first from within. This could mean current staff or outstanding lay people who seem to have the “right stuff” for the role as detailed in the PD. If the people within Willow itself form the “bull’s eye” of the potential candidate pools, the next concentric ring out – like on an archery target – comes from Willow Creek Association (WCA) churches. Shearer said these churches likely share a similar set of interests and passions with Willow and this fact therefore makes them a very viable source for quality candidates.

The outermost concentric ring of the candidate pool then comes from the entire evangelical community. Shearer agreed that Willow’s visibility in the church community also brings with it a steady stream of unsolicited applicants at any one time. He said they receive applications from and through key staff members who speak at conferences or summits not only around the country but around the world, meeting people who would like to come on staff at Willow. Each serious candidate is, however, required to fill out a standard online application as well as send in some type of resume detailing what they’ve been doing, how they’ve been doing it and what God is doing in their lives at the present time in order to enter the process.300

299 Ibid.

300 See http://www.willowcreek.org/employment.asp.
Once the hiring process has officially been initiated with a candidate upon receipt of their application, Willow has no formal “we’ve received your application” letter sent to those candidates through which to educate them with respect to the succession of steps of the hiring process, as has been seen at Fellowship. Shearer stated emphatically, however, that every candidate receives a personal telephone call to acknowledge receipt of their application and resume. “We get back to everybody,” Shearer said. He said the personal phone call was mainly to manage a candidate’s expectations and to inform him or her of the next step of the process – one step at a time. It also adds a personal touch to what – at such a large organization – might be perceived otherwise as a cold and/or inhuman process. Perhaps it even makes hiring a ministry in and of itself.

The HR department conducts the initial interview with the applicants by telephone. They engage in this preliminary conversation in order to screen out or remove candidates who do not currently possess the required education, experience, giftedness or “call.” For example, if a pastoral position description required a certain level of education and a man did not possess the required degree, the Human Resources team would graciously thank that individual for applying in a follow up phone call but remove them from the list of qualified candidates. Just from the number of unsolicited candidates Willow receives the percentage of candidates removed at this stage must undoubtedly be large.

**Comparison to the Pattern**

Shearer’s description of looking across a breadth of potential candidates for “God’s man” conforms well with Resolution 3, “Resolve to consider only potential team candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required degree of fit.” Clearly from the

---

301 Shearer, “Personal Communication.”
initial “pass/fail” call to each applicant HR is looking to pass through only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum requirements Willow has established for fit for that particular role, such as education, experience or sense of God’s calling. This breadth of search also conforms well, more specifically, with the recommended best practice of “consider both traditional and non-traditional candidates.”

Regarding “consider both traditional and non-traditional candidates” Shearer indicates that they look both within and without Willow to find the right pastor with the right gifts and talents for their open role. This means they are willing to seriously consider qualified lay people in addition to those trained in seminary. He indicated as well that Willow receives a number of unsolicited applicants on a regular basis who must have varied backgrounds and experiences as well. Yet as Shearer also said, Willow needs certain ministry outcomes accomplished (e.g. the 2010 goals) therefore they pursue the best of these potential candidates to fulfill their need. They clearly do not limit themselves to one venue for discovering potential “right fit” candidates, tapping not only into their staff, lay people, Willow Creek Association churches and the general evangelical community at-large. In fact, Bill Hybels has estimated that as much as 75% of their staff hires have come from within Willow.\(^{302}\)

Also, the number of unsolicited applications Willow receives every year coupled with their more Spirit-led, intuitive bent helps explain why 10% of the time they do not even have a written PD prepared for a role. With such a responsive mindset they perhaps see these applicants as cases of “God knows better what we need than we do” and thus humbly desire to follow his leading instead of rigidly holding on to their own plans. This seems to be a clear example of the idea of trusting in the sovereign leading of God through dependent prayer, as discussed in Chapter 2, rather than just depending on

\(^{302}\) Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 85.
the wisdom and perception of men. When seen in this light, such a responsive spirit and flexible mindset seems both noteworthy and commendable.

Regarding the best practice of using an “Opportunity Profile” to surface more passive candidates, meaning those pastors who may not be actively or aggressively pursuing a new ministry opportunity but might be open to one should providence present it, Shearer never commented. He did not mention pursuing candidates from other churches for Willow’s open roles. However, in his book, *Courageous Leadership*, Hybels seems in general to embrace this idea. If Willow, in fact, pursues pastors from other churches, it did not come up in these conversations and therefore the idea of an Opportunity Profile was never broached. However, since they do post open positions on their website, they at least acknowledge that some passive candidates might be attracted to a new opportunity.

Overall Willow shows a strong level of conformity with Resolution 3. First, it is clear that they search for candidates across a broad range of potential candidate pools. Second, they evidence selectivity among candidates based on the pre-determined requirements from the approved PD. Third, though not part of the recommended best practices they show a remarkable “personal touch” in their process that is worthy of special note and commendation.

*The Interview Conversations*

**Case Description and Commentary**

Perhaps the most unique thing about Willow is not in the *what* of what they’re looking for, but in the *how* they discover what they’re looking for. As Shearer has already outlined it, the process is not a cold, bureaucratic, mechanical process but instead a very

---

303 Ibid., 84.
relational, organic one. From the first telephone call to the final face-to-face interview, Willow follows an intentional, well-orchestrated, relational and conversational discovery process to uncover each candidate’s sense of call, Christian character, personal competency and chemistry with the current staff team. Perhaps it can best be described as an ever-spiraling-inward series of personal conversations, homing in on God’s man. Shearer and his team believe very strongly that through these conversations they will have a Spirit-directed intuition regarding God’s candidate. He indicated they also have a keen, albeit notable-to-be-articulated, sense of what they are looking for and trust God for the discernment they will need to recognize it as they interact personally with each candidate. About these interviews, Shearer says, “There’s a spiritual authenticity really that we’re looking for….We want folks who’re real….[and] I haven’t found anything better than talking with them, [a] dig around in their life kind of thing…I haven’t found anything better [than talking with them for hours].”

Willow does not rely on self-administered instruments (e.g. DiSC, Myers-Briggs, StrengthsFinder, etc.) to winnow their list of potential candidates, nor do they believe that these instruments accurately predict how a candidate will perform in the position. The concern is that this type of “scientific” process eliminates, in this author’s words, a “Spirit-to-Spirit” connection, and they might inadvertently pass by God’s man based on a test. Shearer even speculated, “I don’t even know if God will let you do that [use solely instruments to identify God’s man] to be honest with you, at least that’s been my experience.” Willow, however, does use a couple of instruments to affirm what they’ve sensed during their conversations, but they are only used to affirm and to help them assimilate who they believe is God’s man into the team. Shearer felt strongly that

---

304 Shearer, “Personal Communication.”

305 Ibid.
self-administered instruments do not produce nor can they determine the pool of qualified candidates. Instead this must be done through personal interaction.

Not surprisingly, the interview conversations use the outline of Call, Character, Competency and Chemistry found in Hybel’s book *Courageous Leadership*.\(^{306}\) This outline, in fact, is almost used as a grid for discovering information and discerning God’s leading in the hiring process. For an organization with almost 600 staff members – and as Shearer stated before, they hire about 60 people per year – the level of relational intentionality and personal touch is truly extraordinary. In an actual interview Shearer said he would walk each candidate through this four-part grid, one step at a time.

Shearer said Willow begins each dialog with a candidate by hearing about his sense of God’s call on his life. This is, in fact, probably the biggest area of difference with respect to how an IBM might hire – this is a holy conversation, a ministry discovery process, not just a job interview. While he said there is no standard set of questions they use, they clearly look for evidence of a God-given passion or energy level regarding a certain portion of doctrine or toward a certain church ministry function. They want to know what makes this candidate “come alive” according to God’s sovereign design in their life. With respect to discovering a candidate’s sense of calling to ministry, especially with respect to serving at Willow, Shearer says,

> Time is really the most key factor, and sometimes it’s creating a tension around their impatience, wanting things to happen more quickly. When they come to that sense of tension around them, wanting things to move fast, one of the first places mature Christians will go is to God, and in doing so they will then take the time to really seek out – and it’s very common we’ll have somebody come back to us at that point and say, ‘You know, I really wanted to do this, but it’s becoming abundantly clear that this isn’t what God wants me to do.’\(^{307}\)

---

\(^{306}\) Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 80-5, 186.

\(^{307}\) Shearer, “Personal Communication.”
One could easily sense a candidate’s tension growing, knowing that a typical hiring process could take 3-6 weeks ranging all the way up to one year, depending on the role. But Willow seems to be striving to “get it right” rather than just getting it done quickly.

A somewhat unique issue Willow faces on a more regular basis, that many other churches do not, is that people want to come on to Willow’s staff for reasons having nothing to do with God’s call, but rather to satisfy some fleshly desire for power, prestige, notoriety, etc. Shearer reiterated in these cases that time is their greatest ally in the discovery process. If they begin to sense a candidate is applying for somewhat “darker” reasons, slowing down the process will many times reveal a candidate’s true motivations and/or God’s call. He shares, for example, that if the candidate turns to God during a protracted waiting period and manifests patience with the delay, they might continue on with him in the process; if on the other hand he becomes impatient and angry he has likely selected himself out from further consideration.

With respect to uncovering or revealing a candidate’s Christian character, the conversation is straightforward. Shearer said Bill Hybels spoke on the issue of character at last year’s (2007) Leadership Summit, “Bill spoke on this last year at the Leadership Summit and he said, you know, character is a non-negotiable. A person has to have the spiritual maturity and ability to be a model to others from a spiritual perspective and have a prepared lifestyle ready to be in ministry…”

Shearer, and undoubtedly his team, seems also to have developed a “nose” for sniffing out a lack of authenticity in candidates. Shearer said they can sniff out a candidate who is trying to present himself in a less than authentic way in order to join the staff quickly. They can discern between being told what the candidate thinks the church wants to hear and what is, in fact, true. That lack of authenticity signals a crack in the

\[308\] Ibid.
candidate’s character foundation that is, in Shearer’s words, “called out” to see how the candidate responds. If the candidate responds appropriately, perhaps there is a chance they might continue on; if he continues to try and deceive, though done graciously, the interview will be concluded and the candidate will be dropped from the qualified list.

Regarding a candidate’s competence, Shearer agreed in a general sense that past performance in a ministry function is probably the best predictor of future performance. He says,

More specifically it tends to be more true here at Willow. I know that’s not always true at other churches, but I think in our culture, because we are such a performance-driven culture here at Willow – so if I can get a sense of what you’ve done and how you’ve done it, I can have a better sense of how you’ll fit here.\(^{309}\)

He acknowledged that certainly there might be some legitimate reasons for under-performing in the past, but these reasons would need to be fleshed out during the conversation. Willow wants to bring aboard candidates who can hit the ground running, who can perform in their new role at a high level, but Shearer did say that in their experience God’s man can be trained or coached in many areas of competence in which he might need to grow.

Second only to character, chemistry is of vital importance to Willow for sustaining the scope as well as their expectations for ministry. So through conversation they seek to sense a fit rather than test for it through some self-administered, off-the-shelf instrument. However, they do use one instrument, the Predictive Index System, as an across-the-board assessment for those who make it through the initial screening interview, not so much to winnow the candidate pool as to help orient future interview conversations to go deeper with more insightful and more personal questions. The Predictive Index System says this about itself on its website,

\(^{309}\) Ibid.
The Predictive Index System (PI®) is a unique, in-house management system that adds objectivity to the "people side" of a business. For over 50 years (1955) the Predictive Index System has objectively predicted, described and measured the work behavior and potential of individuals and groups at all organizational levels.

This internationally used system (available in over 60 languages) provides an in-depth assessment of performance drives, management styles, capabilities, potentials, and motivation.

The PI Management Workshop teaches leaders and managers how to objectively manage and develop future leaders, employees and the total organization by utilizing the PI System. The PI Management Workshop teaches leaders and managers how to manage, communicate and develop each employee or new hire.

PRO ® - Analysis of Behavioral Job Requirements (Job Profiles) The PRO (Performance Requirement Options) is a job analysis tool that gives precise and objective information about specific job behavioral requirements.

The PRO and PI Checklist work together to match employees or applicants to the behavioral needs of a position at a specific organization.

PI ® Checklist – The PI Checklist, which is a free-choice, sophisticated instrument available in over 60 languages, has been administered millions of times and is widely recognized as a superior assessment tool with extensive validation.

PI ® Job Validity Studies Job validity studies provide an objective and quantitative examination of the relationships between PI patterns and job performance for a given job in a given company. The results provide a client with a data-driven PI pattern for a particular job. The validity study assesses the job-relatedness (as defined by EEOC guidelines) of the use of PI for a particular job in a particular company. Validity studies are conducted at no charge for client companies.³¹⁰

One thing of note is that Willow uses an international instrument through which to gain insight into its candidates. This is not a homegrown product but rather one that has been adopted and validated by many users worldwide.

Shearer said they don’t use self-administered instruments (e.g. DISC, Myers-Briggs, Strengthsfinder, etc.) to eliminate, but rather to affirm what they are collectively sensing about a candidate. He did note, however, that they use Strengthsfinder on every newly hired individual to put language to what they had intuitively sensed and to gain some level of insight into their “natural wiring.” And each new hire is given a personalized assessment and debriefing session with a trained individual who helps massage that new hire into their new ministry team.

In summary, Willow seems to have developed a comfort level with StrengthsFinder and the Predictive Index System and use both as supplements to the Position Description in order to probe into the area of behavioral fit, just as a resume and a track record might reveal the potential level of competence fit. But primarily they rely on spiraling spiritual conversations to reveal a fit in the areas of character, calling and competence. It seems clear that Willow not only wants the role filled and the ministry outcomes accomplished, but desires a “whole man” fit as well.

**Comparison to the Pattern**

Shearer’s description of Willow’s procedures presents a very thorough pastoral candidate interview process. Several summary observations may be made to help bring Step 2 of their hiring process into better focus. First, Willow’s process seeks to blend science and art, the objective and the intuitive, the biblical and the marketplace, as did Fellowship’s. If it is slanted toward one side of a hypothetical scale, as it seems it is, it certainly tilts toward the Spirit-led intuition and discernment side. Second, it uses multiple spiritual conversations to compile as well-rounded, objective and authentic picture of a candidate’s divine design as possible. Third, Willow conducts these conversations through the grid of the four C’s (Calling, Character, Competence and Compatibility). Fourth, they use only one or two self-administered instruments to affirm what they believe they have already discovered about a candidate rather than to
disqualify them. It is also clear that they use the information from StrenghtsFinder and the Predictive Index to suggest potential avenues for deeper conversations with the candidate in the future. And fifth, they view the whole interview process, a discovery process, as a way to gather data that will be prayerfully evaluated before finally declaring a match for the staff team.

These summary observations conform quite well with Resolution 4, “Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team.” Their process also conforms well, more specifically, with all four recommended best practices from the template. First, while Shearer did not specify an absolute minimum number of interviews, the time investment for completing Willow’s process suggests at least two interviews in addition to the first screening interview, making no less than three interviews in total with at least two being face-to-face. Second, according to Shearer, all reference checks are completed before the interview process is counted as complete.311

Furthermore, it is clear that Willow relies on another of the recommended best practices, using “structured, behavior-based style interviewing format as a data-gathering tool rather than a decision-making tool.” In other words, Willow relies on a systematic process of face-to-face interviews to gather data about a candidate first, rather than making a more impulsive, “real time” decision. Multiple interviews with multiple staff are used to develop a consensus discernment about a candidate. It is unclear how structured these interviews actually are with respect to how consistently and rigorously the same questions are asked or how far in the past the interviewers are trying to anchor a candidate’s track record. However, it is clear that they rely on these personal interviews

311 Shearer, “Personal Communication.”
or spiritual conversations rather than on self-administered instruments to provide the vast bulk of data needed for discerning God’s right fit for their role.

The fourth and final best practice under Resolution 4 is to bring all potential candidates, presuming there is more than one, all the way through the interview process before declaring the final match. Shearer did not touch on the potential of this, but it is not hard to imagine that Willow would have more than one candidate for any open role. Based on the sense of thoroughness with which Willow conducts their interviews it is speculated that if two or more candidates were to make it to the “final round” they would both complete the interview process in its entirety before undergoing a final, prayerful evaluation and selection.

Again from the vantage point of Step 2, Willow’s hiring process shows good conformity with Resolution 3 and substantial conformity with Resolution 4.

*Step 3: Recommendation and Offer/Hire*

Finally, once one or more legitimate candidates have been surfaced, they complete the final set of placement and on-boarding steps.

**Case Description and Commentary**

Steps 1 and 2 of Willow’s hiring process are now complete. The final phase is Step 3, “Recommendation and Offer/Hire.” Once the Human Resources team and the respective Ministry Leader(s) have agreed that they have discerned God’s man for the job, the process steps fully into public view. References are completed, including any that might be from the candidate’s present church or community. Following this, HR and the Ministry Leader jointly recommend their candidate to the Senior Leadership Team for their prayerful approval. Once that approval is secured a formal offer is tendered to the prospective candidate, most often by the Ministry Leader to whom the new hire will report through a telephone conversation. No formal offer letter detailing terms is sent; it is all done verbally.
It is also at this stage, after the hire is made, that Willow does its child, student and vulnerable adult safety and protection research – following the actual hire. Background checks into sexual offenses, etc. are completed and documented as the first post-hire act and, as Shearer says, “In essence we outsource it to an internal ministry here do it. HR doesn’t conduct it. We can’t.” This provides the Human Resources department a necessary insulation from concerns over fairness and non-discrimination during the hiring process.

As of this writing there are no formal orientation meetings for the new hire, other than a facility tour. While Shearer indicated that they have thought about a short set of orientation classes, they have not pursued them. Besides completing the standard type of employment paperwork the new hire gets busy in his ministry area just as soon as possible, working under the guidance of his Ministry Leader. There is no probationary period for a new hire, especially at the pastoral level, as this would potentially be embarrassing to the church as well as traumatic for the newly-relocated pastor and his family if things did not work out as planned.

**Comparison to the Pattern**

Shearer’s description of how a candidate’s interviewing process is concluded confirms again that Willow is firmly committed to completing the discovery process before declaring a final match for the staff team.

**Summary and Bearing on Project Hypotheses**

A case study on the hiring process of Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois, has been completed through three solicited interviews with Rob Shearer, Staff Manager for the Human Resource department. Overall, this case has

\[312\] Ibid.
revealed another church who is committed to getting it right when it comes to pastoral hiring. That their process conforms well with most of the resolutions from the idealized pattern has been clearly shown. In addition, Shearer’s words provide some evidence of Willow’s use of many of the recommended best practices from the template. It seems justified beyond a reasonable doubt then that this “great” church has, in part, enjoyed a long track record of achieving its stated mission as a result of institutionalizing its desire to hire right fit pastors through its procedures, interview strategy, approvals and committed hiring decision-makers and then executing on it with great effectiveness.

**Hypothesis 1**

This project’s first hypothesis is stated as follows: There is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who pray and the church actually fulfilling its vision. If Rob Shearer is a fair representative of a hiring decision-maker at Willow Creek, then Willow’s hiring decision-makers are men and women of prayer. As described earlier, this was definitely “caught” from the overall conversations with Mr. Shearer rather than coming in one explicit quote. An attitude of prayer definitely pervades their entire process, and has been described as the desire for the Lord’s leading through discernment, intuition and consensus, knowing that nothing but prayer for the Spirit’s leading will suffice to bring closure to this process. There is a legitimate dependence on prayer at Willow and as well an observable linkage between prayer in their hiring process and hiring well repeatedly. Therefore, regarding the information revealed through this case, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

**Hypothesis 2**

This project’s second hypothesis is stated as follows: There is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who use best business hiring practices and a church actually fulfilling its vision. Clearly, this case has shown beyond reasonable doubt that Willow not only depends on prayer but also depends on best
business practices that facilitate their prayerful desire to hire rightly and do it repeatedly. It is noteworthy that though Willow follows the spirit of each of the four resolutions, they did not as rigorously pre-define their target hire as did Fellowship. Two conclusions may be drawn from this. First, the information revealed through this case reasonably confirms the second hypothesis. And second, Willow’s apparent success in hiring well may suggest that the level of definition prescribed by the idealized pattern is somewhat too high.

Table 3, found in Appendix K, summarizes the results of the qualitative comparison between Willow’s actual hiring and the predicted, idealized pattern.

Summary of Chapter 4

Two case studies on the pastoral hiring processes of so-called “great” churches were prepared for this project: (1) Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock, Arkansas; and (2) Willow Creek Community Church of South Barrington, Illinois. In each case an experienced, executive-level hiring decision-maker was interviewed regarding how his respective church went about hiring new pastors for its staff. Each case was presented as it flowed from the interview conversations through a generalized three-step process, moving from Step 1: Preparation and Approval, to Step 2: Recruitment and Interview, through Step 3: Recommendation and Offer/Hire.

Though the specifics of each process differed, as would be expected, in general both churches showed a remarkable level of conformity to the predicted biblically-grounded hiring resolutions as well as in many of their associated best practices. Regarding Resolution 1, “Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction,” both churches unequivocally embrace this

313 See Chapter 3 for an explanation of what it means to be a “great” church for the purposes of this project.
conviction for hiring. Both Mr. Dean and Mr. Shearer gave testimony to the fact that their key hiring decision-makers engage in persistent prayer throughout the process. Both churches also exercise disciplined patience by following similar procedural steps, including “go/no go” approval from one form of supervisor or another. Both of these churches not only desire to “get it right” with respect to hiring, but have put procedures in place to institutionalize their desire in day-to-day practice.

Regarding Resolution 2, “Resolve to define a new team member’s role and minimum degree of fit using the four C criteria,” both churches again unequivocally embrace the spirit of predetermining a hiring target rather than just hoping the next “good guy” they come across will also somehow be a “great fit.” It is also speculated that Fellowship’s Position Focus Sheet (Appendix F) is much more detailed and precise than Willow’s Position Description, but that is partly because no sample of Willow’s PD was provided for reference. Interestingly, both churches interview thoroughly using at least three of the four C’s (Calling, Character, Competence and Compatibility) but neither one has incorporated any of the C’s into their respective target definitions. Further, neither church has gone to the extent of thoroughly pre-defining minimum thresholds for their key requirements, except for things like education or spiritual gift. Yet, there is overall a large conformity with Resolution 2 for Fellowship and somewhat less conformity with Willow.

Regarding Resolution 3, “Resolve to consider only potential team candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required degree of fit,” both churches again unequivocally embrace the spirit of this resolution. Both use some method for screening every applicant and only passing through those who meet at least the minimum thresholds required by their written target document. And both consider multiple pools of candidates, both within and without their churches as well as seek referrals from personal and professional networks and staff. But as very little information was exchanged regarding surfacing passive non-traditional candidates, (e.g. pastors who are already
happily engaged at another church but might be interested in another role if it were the right kind of role) not much insight was gained regarding using an Opportunity Profile. However, both churches evidenced a great deal of conformity with Resolution 3, and explicitly with one of the two best practices associated with it.

And finally regarding Resolution 4, “Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team,” both churches embrace this practice as well. Both view the interview process as a data gathering tool rather than a decision-making tool. Both also conduct no fewer than three total interviews, with at least two being face-to-face. And both complete all reference checks on the finalist(s). If preferences, biases, or caricatures could be made Fellowship would certainly lean toward using self-administered instruments, perhaps even preferentially, to discover a candidate’s sense of fit with the staff and the church as opposed to relying on their interviewer’s discernment and their interviewing process. Willow, on the other hand, would lean hard the other way, using their interview process over self-administered instruments to affirm what the interviewers believe they are discerning about a given candidate. Yet not even Willow, who has virtually “sold out” to using interviews as its main data-gathering vehicle uses a strict structured, behavior-based style interviewing format. And again, both churches complete the full interview process before recommending their final right fit match for the staff team.

This project put forth two hypotheses, (1) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who pray and the church actually fulfilling its vision; and (2) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who use best business hiring practices and a church actually fulfilling its vision. Based on the evidence surfaced from two different churches and their high level of conformity with both the idealized hiring template as well as each other suggests very strongly that these two hypotheses have been confirmed beyond a reasonable doubt.
Intertwining hiring decision-makers who pray and who use best practices from the marketplace and the church indeed make more right fit pastoral hires more repeatedly.

These are two churches that in some ways could not be more different. And yet these are two churches who have become “great” churches due, in part, by getting it right with respect to hiring the right pastors with the right gifts and talents for the right roles and doing it repeatedly, in fact for decades. Whatever their differences may be as churches, the similarity of their hiring processes and conformity with a biblically-grounded right fit hiring process and each other suggests that there is much to be learned by any church desiring to become everything God is calling them to become. But it may begin with learning to hire better.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This ministry research project closes by qualitatively proving three issues. First, there is a probable linkage between relying on biblical principles, prayer and best marketplace practices for longer-term vision achievement as proposed in the project hypotheses: (1) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who pray and the church actually fulfilling its vision; and (2) there is an association between those hiring decision-makers in the local church who use best business hiring practices and a church actually fulfilling its vision. Second, the conclusions of this project are seen to be in line with state of the art church and marketplace literature as shown in the footnotes in this section. And last, any church that implements the “right fit” hiring process described herein stands a high probability of raising the quality of its next pastoral hire.

Toward these ends, general observations regarding overall project results are made first. These are followed by specific observations and conclusions regarding each of the four hiring points made in a resolution-by-resolution format. Next, conclusions regarding the validation of the twin hypotheses of this ministry research project are presented. Finally, the investigator’s thoughts and implications for further study are advanced. Table 4, found in Appendix L, summarizes the two sets of results obtained from interviewing the subject churches presenting these results side-by-side and alongside the predicted, idealized pattern.
General Observations

Four general observations are drawn from the results of this ministry research project. First, as different as these two churches might be, there is a remarkable degree of similarity between their hiring processes. Certainly this is partly accounted for in the subjective nature of a qualitative study as well as the unconscious biases in the investigator’s judgment calls. The fairly coarse qualitative grid established for the comparison could also play a role. Yet while these are acknowledged the similarity of the results appears far too great to be coincidental. Rather, it seems to strongly suggest that there is a hiring pattern that may yield more right fit results versus traditionally achieved results that come from following a less structured process or a different process altogether. According to the information gathered in the two case studies, it does seem that “great” churches know how and do repeatedly make “great” hires and this is at least one key for achieving their stated vision over decades.

Second, both churches’ hiring processes intentionally or intuitively conform well to the four biblically-derived hiring resolutions. At no point in their processes do they depart from these major biblical principles explicitly or implicitly prescribed in the New Testament. This, of course, suggests that God honors those churches and hiring decision-makers who honor his Word and the principles contained therein, as well as those who seek his continual direction and discernment through persistent prayer.

Third, both churches either intentionally or intuitively combine biblical principles with state of the art best hiring practices from the marketplace. Again, with one exception, both churches’ processes conform to the recommended best practices surfaced in the literature review almost exactly or at least “in spirit.” This suggests that there is freedom to use helpful, tested marketplace practices to facilitate a biblically-based hiring process for identifying right fit pastors. The lone exception is the absence of something like an Opportunity Profile to surface passive candidates for an open role. Perhaps neither
of these particular churches needs to improve their candidate pools. Perhaps they have a robust enough candidate selection with unsolicited inquiries. Whatever the reasons, however, their overall use of best practices complements their dependence on biblical principles and also seems to be a key part of the success of their hiring processes.

Finally, since these two different churches have intentionally or intuitively developed such similar hiring processes, it seems reasonable to assume that any local church can improve its own hiring process – and thereby more closely reach for its stated vision – by adhering to this idealized pattern. Hiring well is hard work, but it also seems to be something that can be learned and improved upon by the diligent church hiring decision-maker.

**Specific Conclusions**

Specific conclusions are drawn from the results of Chapter 4 that are seen to align well with concepts and principles surfaced through the literature review. These conclusions are presented in a resolution-by-resolution format below.

**Resolution 1: The Conviction**

Resolution 1 expresses the conviction that getting the right pastor with the right gifts and talents in the right role makes the biggest impact to a staff and to a church.\(^{314}\) It is the settled commitment to partner with God to enact his vision and pursue his objective for team ministry in the local church.\(^{315}\) It is the pre-determined decision by church hiring decision-makers to get it right, to hire a pastor who will most tightly fit into

---

\(^{314}\) Scripturally this conviction is the obedient follow-through of honoring the passages and pictures in God’s Word regarding the concept of team: the Holy Trinity, partnerships in the early church and the human body metaphor Paul uses for the church. As far as the impact such hires make, this resolution is in accordance with church authors such as Gary McIntosh and Aubrey Malphurs as well as in line with business thinkers and authors such as Jim Collins, Peter Drucker and Ed Michaels, et. al.

Certainly there can be no expectation of a perfect fit, resulting in endless recruiting and interviewing, but Resolution 1 does insist on a commitment to disciplined patience to recruit and hire for role and fit and not to settle for the instant gratification of a poor fit. Resolution 1 reflects the fundamental and non-negotiable mindset that hiring well makes a big difference and it is the presence of that mindset that prevents hiring from degenerating from a strategic ministry to just another activity.

Both Fellowship and Willow show evidence of this conviction, this set of beliefs and commitments, to do what it takes to get it right when it comes to hiring pastors. First and foremost, they see hiring as a ministry and therefore submit their hiring needs as well as the entire process to persistent prayer. After reflecting on the conversation with Mr. Shearer especially one cannot help but be struck by the posture of prayer Willow takes toward hiring. It is not a generic “of course we pray” sentiment; it is rather an attitude that is felt and caught from beginning to end. There is a very deliberate dependence on prayer both on the part of Fellowship and Willow Creek when it comes to hiring pastors. Prayer pervades their processes and they clearly intend to seek and wait on God to bring the right person to fill their open role. They would rather have it right than have it soon.

---

316 Michaels, Handfield-Jones, and Axelrod, The War for Talent, 9. One corollary of their research: The fact that organizations do not take confident, decisive action belies their lack of commitment to the underlying philosophy that nothing matters more than recruiting the right people.

317 Drucker, Managing the Non-Profit Organization: Principles and Practices, 145. "People determine the performance capacity of an organization. No organization can do better than the people it has..."

318 Michaels, Handfield-Jones, and Axelrod, The War for Talent, x. "...we have observed time and time again the fundamental importance of a talent mindset. Without this mindset, recruiting becomes [merely] an activity."

319 Rendle and Beaumont, When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations, 77.
To further facilitate getting it right they have put procedures and approvals in place to minimize their own impulsivity and to maximize their objectivity. No short cuts are allowed, nor does it appear that anyone has unilateral authority to circumvent the hiring process. It is a process that has definitely been institutionalized in procedures in order to protect their desire to hire well. Its concrete actions and approvals keep the process moving forward but not without accountability. The process does not let recruiting jump ahead without at least one other person having a more objective look at both the hiring target and the candidate or candidates. Such procedures and approvals also seem to help both churches leave a role open longer than many churches might be comfortable with rather than filling it with “almost” right.

Fellowship and Willow only differ in Resolution 1 with respect to the level of ownership the direct supervisor takes for recruiting his new hire. Fellowship, in line with best practices, requires its direct supervisors to prepare their new report’s Position Focus Sheet. Willow, on the other hand, definitely involves the direct supervisor in developing the Position Description but contrary to best practices gives the leadership role to Human Resources. From the information solicited in the case studies the impact on any pastor’s longevity from this difference is indeterminate.

Both Fellowship and Willow Creek not only express a conviction for getting it right, but have put forth hard evidence that they do what it takes to follow their desire through. In these things they show good alignment with both the Scriptures and appropriately using best practices to facilitate their ends.

---

320 Adler, Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams, 18. "More hiring mistakes are made in the first half-hour of an interview than at any other time. I told him that if he could delay his decisions, favorable or unfavorable, he would eliminate 50 percent of his hiring mistakes."

321 Bossidy and Charan, Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done, 110-11. "If you look at any business that's consistently successful, you'll find that its leaders focus intensely and relentlessly on people selection."
Three conclusions are worth reiterating regarding Resolution 1 from this study. First, church hiring decision-makers would be wise to prayerfully embrace a not easily swayed conviction that getting hiring right is one of the single biggest factors they can exercise toward helping their church realize its stated vision. This could be facilitated by studying the passages and biblical pictures under “Four Resolutions That Anchor a Biblical Right Fit Process” from Chapter 2 in order to more clearly see God’s objective for hiring.

Second, church hiring decision-makers would be wise to institute some set of hard-to-break procedures and approval processes in order to help guard their conviction to hire well. A beginning point can be found in Fellowship’s hiring procedure (Appendix F), Table 2 of Appendix H or a more thorough description from both the marketplace and the church under “Best Practices That Facilitate Resolution 1” from Chapter 2.

Last, church hiring decision-makers would be wise to reassert the priority of prayer in their hiring process. It must be more than a placing a “check mark” next to pray on an agenda. It must be a persistent, dependent attitude of prayer asking God for his direction and discernment on the right fit candidate for the open role. One could easily review Jesus’ overnight prayer vigil to know his Father’s choice for his disciples (Luke 6:12-13) as just one example for the appropriate spirit of dependent prayer. In any event, prayer must remain “the show” rather than being allowed to become the “side show” of any pastoral hiring process.

Resolution 2: The Target

Resolution 2 requires defining what a right fit looks like before recruiting begins. It expresses the need for hiring decision-makers to pre-determine what results

322 Scripturally this idea of a “right fit” conforms to Paul teaching the Corinthians about the Body of Christ and each believer playing a role. The Body is not made up of interchangeable parts, but of parts that are divinely-designed to fill one role over all other roles. Accordingly, it would be foolish to ask a
they expect to be produced from the open role.\textsuperscript{323} It strongly recommends establishing the hiring target by using something like a success profile that specifies in biblical terms what is actually expected of a right fit pastor by defining the open role’s mission, five or six measurable 12-month outcomes and character and behavior expectations around the 4 C criteria of Character, Call, Competence and Compatibility.\textsuperscript{324} It requires being disciplined about pre-defining the hiring bull’s eye and then using that scorecard as the standard for determining right fit.\textsuperscript{325}

Both Fellowship and Willow show strong evidence of pre-determining their hiring bull’s eye using some definition of the role’s mission, expected outcomes and general responsibilities in respectively, a Position Focus Sheet and a Position Description.\textsuperscript{326} Again, their procedures require making this target as thorough and objective as possible by requiring a supervisor’s approval before the search is allowed to commence. This certainly prevents both churches from hiring a man they like, and then hoping he can do what is needed. One proviso has been made at Willow, as Mr. Shearer hand or a liver to serve longer-term in the role of a mouth, and vice-versa. Church authors such as Gary McIntosh and Erik Rees (S.H.A.P.E.) have written on this idea of each pastor being a “specialist” not a “generalist.” Thus it is important to know the size and shape of an open role for how it points to the shape and size of the ideal candidate. See also Harold Westing (p. 84) for the need to pre-define “winning” for a church and church staff.

\textsuperscript{323} Adler, \textit{Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams}, 35. "Hiring great people is about defining the desired results, and then finding people with the ability and desire to deliver these results. It’s not about listing skills and qualifications."

\textsuperscript{324} The idea of using a success profile versus the traditional job description is prevalent in the marketplace literature, Lou Adler, Janet Boydell and Geoff Smart being representative. Charles Olson and Bill Hybels are representative authors in the church who have both proposed, advocated and used the biblical 4 C criteria for hiring pastors.

\textsuperscript{325} Drucker, \textit{The Essential Drucker: The Best of Sixty Years of Peter Drucker's Essential Writings on Management}, 128. "Of all the decisions an executive makes, none is as important as the decisions about people because they determine the performance capacity of the organization."

\textsuperscript{326} Rendle and Beaumont, \textit{When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations}, 41-2. "...when staff do not know what they are being held accountable to produce, they tend to value and measure their work by the amount of time consumed or the number of tasks accomplished." Thus using a success profile is extremely necessary.
noted, that perhaps ten percent of the time they believe God brings them a man with whom they then collaboratively create the bull’s eye. From this investigator’s perspective both churches are to be commended for the prayerful time and effort they put into defining their desired target. They seem to understand very well that the better any church understands what they are looking for, the closer they will come to prayerfully discerning it during the hiring process. This is the required beginning point for achieving a right fit.

Neither church at first glance seems to pre-define minimum acceptable thresholds for their expected outcomes or the 4 C criteria. 327 Without their document, exactly what Willow does is only speculation, but Fellowship’s PFS does not contain written, pre-determined thresholds regarding what is “acceptable” versus what is “not acceptable.” However, it is clear from the case studies that both churches do have minimum thresholds in virtually all four of the C’s. That is why they so rigorously interview around these categories. As well, both Dean and Shearer indicated that in the areas of required education, for example, there were definitely expectations that were met or the candidate is dropped from further consideration.

Perhaps these decision-makers determine or recognize thresholds “on the fly” based on consensus discussions during the interview process rather than establishing absolute thresholds ahead of time. From best practices, this relative threshold would be less objective and less desirable than getting consensus on an absolute rating scale ahead of time, but perhaps these staff cultures are so well defined that they correctly “feel” one

327 Smart and Street, *Who: The A Method for Hiring*, 15. "By defining A [level] performance for the role, the scorecard gives you a clear picture of what the person you seek needs to be able to accomplish."
candidate who might fit better from another.\footnote{Klinvex, O'Connell, and Klinvex, \textit{Hiring Great People}, 107. "Although interviewers are processing the same candidate information, their standards for acceptable behavior may differ considerably. Without standardized rating scales, the result is generally very different interpretations."} Whatever the actual linkage is, both of these churches have learned and developed ways to thoroughly define and/or feel what is required to perform well in a role and which candidate is more likely to perform at a consistently high level.

There is one further point of interest. Fellowship’s PFS was qualitatively judged better than Willow’s PD as discussed in Chapter 4. If Willow’s hiring target is indeed less structured, less detailed and less defined as speculated and sensed from the interview, then based on the fact that they are still repeatedly making right fit hires perhaps “good enough” is good enough. In other words, maybe putting in more time and energy to specify an increased level of detail and definition reaches a point of diminishing returns. Perhaps Willow’s PD is good enough for a people process like hiring. Unfortunately, without a copy of Willow’s PD a “good enough” level of definition will have to remain in the hands of each local church. But certainly common sense would argue that there is some adequate level of definition that beyond which will not bring returns commensurate with the time investment made.

On the other hand, if Willow’s less defined target is not robust enough then those they are hiring might actually have less tenure and make less impact than if Willow had expended the additional energy to be more precise. Perhaps they are not doing as well at hiring as they think, but as a large organization their capacitance for sustaining an “almost right” hire is greater than it would be for a smaller church staff. Only further investigation into the recorded tenures of each pastor hired by each church could begin to address that issue. Best practice clearly recommends prayerfully, thoughtfully, thoroughly and measurably defining the mission, the desired ministry outcomes and any

\footnote{Klinvex, O'Connell, and Klinvex, \textit{Hiring Great People}, 107. "Although interviewers are processing the same candidate information, their standards for acceptable behavior may differ considerably. Without standardized rating scales, the result is generally very different interpretations."}
expected behaviors ahead of time. Yet it seems that since both churches are repeatedly hiring right fit pastors and have for some time, there is a level of definition they have come to feel comfortable with, probably based on each church’s temperament.

Lastly, both Fellowship and Willow Creek use well-defined hiring targets, completed and approved by a supervisor, as the key gauge for measuring a sense of right fit. In these things they show good alignment with both the Scriptures and appropriately using best practices to pursue their ends.

Four important conclusions are worth reiterating for Resolution 2. First, church hiring decision-makers would be wise to pre-define their desired outcomes for the role rather than just specifying a list of tasks on a job description. Both Fellowship and Willow know very clearly who they are and where God is asking them to go. Thus, they have a very clear idea of what kind of a pastor they are looking for who can help them get there. These churches are not looking to hire pastors who will simply complete a list of daily or weekly tasks. Instead, they are intentionally looking for pastors who will under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit deliver the desired outcomes. “Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 2” in Chapter 2 provides a thorough primer on this concept.

Second, decision-makers would be wise to use a success profile to as precisely and succinctly as possible define what success looks like 12 months in the future for any new hire before the first recruit is sought out. Using a success profile to thoroughly define the mission, five or six measurable 12-month outcomes and any character and behavioral expectations around the 4 C’s provides a tremendously informative and objective bull’s eye for recruiting right fit pastors. Again, re-reading the section on “Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 2” in Chapter 2 would provide a broad and deep foundation for creating such a target, especially as it is used in a church context.
Third, hiring decision-makers would be wise to pre-determine minimum acceptable thresholds for the ministry outcomes and the 4 C criteria. This brings a common language and level of consistency to the “scorecard” that is otherwise not there. It is best practice to have these thresholds written down ahead of time, but having a consensus of staff cultural “feel” seems to work under certain circumstances where there is a highly established culture already in place. Again, “Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 2” under Chapter 2 would provide a foundation for creating not only a well-done success profile, but for defining minimum acceptable thresholds.

And fourth, church hiring decision-makers would be wise to remember that sometimes, perhaps ten percent of the time, God will bring along a candidate before a success profile has been created or perhaps the need for the individual has even been envisioned. Decision-makers should remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and responsive to his sovereign work through prayer. This should probably remain the exception rather than the rule, but as Mr. Shearer noted it can and does happen.

Resolution 3: The Candidates

Resolution 3 requires church hiring decision-makers to raise the bar on candidates rather than lowering the bar on expectations. It requires them to consider only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum specified thresholds of Christian Character, who articulate no less than the minimum sense of Calling to the church and/or the role, who exceed every minimum level of required Competence needed to perform in the role at a high level and who at least minimally meet every criteria for theological and

329 Scripturally this resolution follows Paul’s teaching of Timothy (1 Timothy 3) and Titus (Titus 1) regarding the recruitment of elders. Only those men who minimally met the qualifications were to be considered, though perhaps many more (1 Timothy 3:1) had the desire to serve as an elder. Paul never told either Timothy or Titus to settle for “almost.”
cultural Compatibility on the staff. It also expresses the reality that such candidates are usually not the available or the aggressive ones, but are found instead through referrals from both personal and professional networks. And it strongly recommends using a well-done Opportunity Profile to surface even more passive candidates.

Both Fellowship and Willow show evidence of a breadth of search for the right candidate. They clearly have a high bar when it comes to what they need done at their churches, and because they are unwilling to lower that bar, they “fish” in every candidate “pond” available to them. As the cases reveal, they both tap into traditional sources for good recruits: (1) their own staffs, (2) seminaries, and (3) professional and personal networks. They also both tap into the slightly less traditional source of their church’s own laity. As well, each of these churches has founded and heads an association of other like-minded churches that provides them with yet another source of top-notch candidates, not to mention the fact that as higher profile churches they receive a number of unsolicited candidates every year. Clearly both of these churches search deeply and broadly for the right kind of candidates. They do not just tap into those who are available or aggressive when searching for the right fit.

---

330 Hybels, Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs, 39. “Train and embolden your staff members to grow their own leadership and then to shoot high when someone needs to be added to the team. Encourage them to go after the brightest, most accomplished, most effective leaders they can find.”

331 Boydell, Deutsch, and Remillard, You’re Not the Person I Hired!: A CEO’s Survival Guide to Hiring Top Talent, 151. The active and agressive candidates are a "marginal source of Top 5% Talent."

332 Smart and Street, Who: The A Method for Hiring, 49-50. "...a full 77 percent of them [industry leaders] cited referrals as their top technique for generating a flow of the right candidates for their businesses."


334 Editor, Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage, 103. The authors note that the most successful organizations know and tap the right talent pools for their hires.
Furthermore, both Mr. Dean and Mr. Shearer expressed during the interview process that their churches exercise a high degree of selectivity when it comes to distinguishing applicants from true candidates.³³⁵ Both said that those applicants who did not meet the minimum thresholds required by either their PFS or PD were dropped from further consideration. Both of these churches seem to have developed staff cultures of perpetual recruitment so that they never “run out” of applicants as might happen at other churches that may rely on just one or two sources for surfacing potential candidates.

And interestingly, neither church mentioned fishing in the more non-traditional “passive candidate” pool. But even simply posting an open position on their church’s website, which both churches do, is a pro-active way of getting the word out to passive candidates.³³⁶ Furthermore, neither church mentioned using a Christian search firm, though as has been pointed out earlier such firms ostensibly have lists of passive candidates and are contracted with increasing frequency in order to raise the bar on the level of pastoral candidates sought out for church staffs.³³⁷ Such firms regularly use this practice, so it would seem, effectively and with some measure of success.³³⁸ It is therefore reasonable to assume that churches who post an Opportunity Profile (Appendix C) in order to surface passive candidates would experience a similar benefit, tapping into yet another pool, for finding the right kinds of candidates.

Both Fellowship and Willow Creek search broadly for candidates who can in the energy of the Holy Spirit deliver the results they seek, rather than allowing only

³³⁵ Boydell, Deutsch, and Remillard, You're Not the Person I Hired!: A CEO's Survival Guide to Hiring Top Talent, 43. She expresses that the top organizations are selective and looking for selective candidates.

³³⁶ For example, Willow Creek has posted a current opening (18 June 2010) for an Executive Pastor at its McHenry campus at http://www.willowcreek.org/employment.

³³⁷ Ross, “The Workers Are Few.”

available candidates to force them to lower their bar. In these things they show good alignment with both the Scriptures and appropriately using best practices to facilitate their ends.

Two conclusions should be reiterated for Resolution 3. First, church hiring decision-makers would be wise to tap every available pool to find the highest quality candidates for their open role. Current staff referrals have been shown to be a rich source for such candidates. Neither should the more non-traditional passive candidate pool be ignored, but rather tapped by means of creating a well-done Opportunity Profile. “Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 3” from Chapter 2 is a good introduction for understanding these pools and how best to fish them, and Appendix C shows an example of an Opportunity Profile appropriate for posting on a church website or to be posted on other job boards at the church’s discretion.

Second, hiring decision-makers would be wise to exercise rigorous selectivity when it comes to narrowing the field of applicants to true candidates. This is objectively and consistently accomplished by staying true to the pre-determined minimum thresholds of fit required by the success profile of Resolution 2. These minimum thresholds can then become the initial telephone interview questions that can be used to identify more precisely the candidates who are potentially a better fit for the open role from those who are not. Again, the detailed discussion under “Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 3” in Chapter 2 provides greater insight into doing this well.

Resolution 4: The Matching Process

Resolution 4 requires church hiring decision-makers to rely on prayerful, relational, objective and thorough interviews before declaring a final right fit match for
the staff team.\textsuperscript{339} It reflects the need for getting a sense of spiritual discernment for
detecting the leading of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{340} It expresses the need for using the structured,
behavior-based style interview to gather as objectively and consistently as possible a real-
life track record from a candidate for later evaluation.\textsuperscript{341} It encourages resisting the
impulse to hire based on an alleged relational “connection” in favor of gathering data
from multiple collection points, namely two or three interviewers familiar with the
requirements and thresholds of the success profile.\textsuperscript{342} It means completing every reference
check before an offer is extended.\textsuperscript{343} And to the fullest extent possible it requires that all
data is collected from all candidates, evaluated in parallel against the success profile, and
then the candidate who is determined to be already aiming at the bull’s eye is extended an
offer.\textsuperscript{344} Resolution 4 is the disciplined gathering, evaluation and matching of all available
data with the requirements of the open position. It is identifying right fit.

\textsuperscript{339} Scripturally this is how Paul counseled Timothy to interview the elder “hires” they needed
to make in First Timothy 3. It was undoubtedly a highly prayerful and relational process.

\textsuperscript{340} From Acts 20:28, Paul indicated that the Holy Spirit had made these Ephesian men to be
overseers over God’s flock. Such discernment probably cannot be obtained through a self-administered
instrument, but rather through face-to-face spiritual conversations and prayer.

\textsuperscript{341} Arthur, \textit{Recruiting, Interviewing, Selecting and Orienting New Employees}, 75. "A
commonly held but erroneous belief is that interviewing does not require any real preparation."

\textsuperscript{342} Orpen, “Patterned Behavior Description Interviews Versus Unstructured Interviews: A
Comparative Validity Study,” 776. After a three hour training managers "...predicted the future job
performance of interviewees more accurately than did interviewers trained in standard interviewing
techniques."

\textsuperscript{343} Smart and Street, \textit{Who: The A Method for Hiring}, 105. "Without having [or making] a
chance to do reference calls, you lose 25 percent of the information you should know."

\textsuperscript{344} Rendle and Beaumont, \textit{When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large
Congregations}, 85. "Behavior-based interviewing is most effectively used in the second round of
interviews when you are trying to assess the competencies and congregational fit."
Fellowship and Willow, as the cases reveal, both evidence a strong commitment to a rigorous face-to-face interview process. In principle, the structured, behavior-based interview is a well-established, proven method of collecting actual data points from a candidate’s past that suggest a future trajectory. But to gain such a level of insight requires a consistent, objective set of questions asked by each interviewer. If such questions exist, neither church offered the list for this research project’s records. Therefore it is speculated that such questions do not exist. On the other hand, both churches use their interviews to collect data rather than to make more speculative or impulsive decisions. In line with best practices they use their interviews to gather data rather than to make decisions.

Furthermore, both cases articulated testimonials that multiple interviews are conducted with multiple individuals, that all references are checked and that the interview data is collected and evaluated before a final recommendation is presented to a supervisor. As has been shown, this is also according to best practices to have a few knowledgeable stakeholders interview the candidates, compile their respective information then evaluate it before declaring a match for the team. Such real-life information, obtained consistently and objectively before it is evaluated keeps the focus

---

345 McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century*, 59. Smart and Street recommend four such interviews: initial telephone; first face-to-face; second face-to-face; and reference checks.

346 Klinvex, O’Connell, and Klinvex, *Hiring Great People*, 102. "A truly structured approach to interviewing involves standardizing not only the interviewing process but also the interview content and the method of evaluation."

347 Adler, *Hire with Your Head: Using Performance-Based Hiring to Build Great Teams*, 147. "Don't make a yes/no decision during the one-on-one interview. Instead, use the interview to collect information on the assigned areas, not to vote."
on a candidate’s fit for the role rather than on less reliable measures such as feelings of connection.\textsuperscript{348}

The use of self-administered instruments is also one area of disparity between two otherwise very similar processes. From the case studies, it seems that Fellowship is informed by the results of the self-administered Servants By Design as well as their interviews. Willow, on the other hand, is primarily informed by its face-to-face interviews and uses the Predictive Index to affirm what it believes it is discerning from its interviews. It seems fair to say that Fellowship relies on two legs: (1) its self-administered instruments; and (2) its face-to-face interviews, while Willow seems to put the majority of its weight on the one leg of spiritual conversations with the candidates. A discussion on self-administered instruments has been done under “Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 2” of Chapter 2 and will not be repeated here, but it is interesting to see the two different schools of thought reflected in these two “great” churches. Thus, to use or not to use instruments is a decision best left to an individual church’s leadership beliefs or temperament, but putting too much weight on self-administered instruments may seem to be swimming against the current rather than with it.\textsuperscript{349}

It should finally be noted that both of these churches have decades-long track records of achieving their stated vision, in part, because of repeatedly hiring right fit pastors.\textsuperscript{350} This fact suggests that there is probably no absolute “right” or “wrong” in this

\textsuperscript{348} McIntosh, \textit{Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century}, 59. "These [interview] questions keep the focus on the position, and the answers reveal the person's substance."

\textsuperscript{349} Drucker, \textit{The Essential Drucker: The Best of Sixty Years of Peter Drucker's Essential Writings on Management}, 133. "We do not know how to test or predict whether a person's temperament will be suited to a new environment. We can find this out only by experience."

\textsuperscript{350} Collins, \textit{Good to Great}, 51. "In a good-to-great transformation, people are not your most important asset. The right people are."
decision on instruments. If a church has access and expertise to administer and interpret the results, self-administered instruments might be used effectively. If, on the other hand, a church does not have the same access or expertise it is not destined to hire only “second class” pastors. Interestingly, in spite of its large resources Willow has chosen to rest the majority of its discernment weight on the face-to-face interview process. This may suggest that relying on multiple, properly done face-to-face interviews is “good enough” for repeatedly bringing about superior hires. It may also reflect an intentional or intuitive level of following the biblical pictures in the Scriptures regarding hiring.

Both Fellowship and Willow Creek interview all real candidates prayerfully, relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a final match for the staff team. In these practices they show good alignment with both the Scriptures and appropriately using best practices to facilitate their ends.

Three conclusions should be reiterated for Resolution 4. First, church hiring decision-makers would be wise to become proficient in the structured, behavior-based style interviewing format. “Best Practices That Facilitate Right Fit Resolution 4” of Chapter 2 contains an in-depth section on this style of interviewing. It also contains some suggested questions and a recommended format. Furthermore, decision-makers should use this style of interview to objectively and consistently gather data about a candidate instead of using the interview to make and/or substantiate impulsive decisions. Remaining relational, objective, thorough and consistent with every candidate is critically important for doing this portion of the hiring process well.

Second, decision-makers would be wise to embrace again the importance of thoroughly and completely checking references. The critical nature of this cannot be overstated. The literature and the case studies all reiterate the importance of doing this right, doing this well, and doing it before any offer is extended.
Third, hiring decision-makers would be wise to discuss their beliefs on the value of self-administered instruments before the next hire opens, and then based on that decision further decide which instrument(s) should become part of their hiring culture. Both Fellowship and Willow seem to have settled on one or two instruments that they use across all ministry departments. In both cases this instrument has become one universal and consistent tool for hiring. It has become part of who they are and how they hire. This seems to be advantageous.

To summarize, these specific conclusions validate that church hiring decision-makers who follow biblical principles as described by the four resolutions, who pray persistently and dependently, and who follow best practices from the marketplace as a way to facilitate the biblical resolutions will repeatedly hire more right fit pastors. And in so doing, these churches will reap an increasing level of vision achievement for their ministry and the Lord’s glory.

Validation of Project Hypotheses

This project has assumed that any church that has a decades-long track record of fulfilling its stated vision must have learned to hire well – to repeatedly recruit the right pastors with the right gifts and talents and place them in the right leadership roles. In this assumption, it is aligning itself with both McIntosh and Collins’ observations that hiring well is one of the most critical issues for vision achievement in any organization, including the church.³⁵¹

Two “great” churches were vetted according to Jim Collins’ three criteria for greatness in the social sector: (1) Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock, Arkansas and (2) Willow Creek Community Church of South Barrington, Illinois. Both of these

churches have decades-long track records of achieving their stated visions and are therefore ideal for investigating their pastoral hiring processes using the case study method.

After completing the case studies and evaluating the results in the preceding pages of this chapter, it is the conclusion of this project that both hypotheses have been validated beyond a reasonable doubt. Regarding hypothesis 1, the Bible clearly portrays the linkage between prayer and “hiring.” In fact, it is no overstatement to say that the presence of prayer is the key and distinguishing element of any hiring process desiring to call itself biblical. It is the prevailing method of seeking and receiving God’s will and direction in the New Testament alongside his Word, and is the example of the Lord Jesus Himself for “hiring” his twelve apostles. An attitude of persistent and diligent prayer reflects a heart that desires to partner with God to see his right fit pastor installed in the right role on the staff team. And in a few cases it may even mean being sensitive and responsive enough to the Spirit’s leading to recognize that God is going before the church and bringing them what they need before they are even aware of the need as in the case of Willow Creek.

Both case studies also revealed unsolicited testimonials regarding the key role prayer plays in their hiring processes. In the case of Fellowship, Mr. Dean expressed the intentionality and dependence his church put on prayer to guide and direct them to God’s man for their open role. And in the case of Willow Creek, during Mr. Shearer’s description of their entire hiring process the attitude of dependent prayer could be “felt” by this investigator. These are two churches for whom prayer is more than a checkmark on an agenda, but is rather the fuel for their whole recruitment processes. Two different and unrelated churches both evidencing a strong dependence on prayer corroborates both the biblical and probable linkage between prayer, hiring well and vision achievement.
Regarding hypothesis 2, while the Scriptures are silent regarding best marketplace practices per se, current “how to” marketplace and church literature is not. In fact, sources from both worlds describe best practices and show linkages with better hiring. And as long as these best practices violate neither biblical passage nor principle and are kept in a subordinate role to the principles derived from the Scriptures, as portrayed in this project’s idealized biblical hiring process, they serve only to enhance.

Again, case studies of two Christ-honoring churches reveal strong evidence of how these two “great” churches rely on best practices in ways that violate neither biblical passage nor principle. Both Fellowship and Willow use a number of best practices to supplement what is readily seen as a Spirit-directed, biblical process. Fellowship’s use of best practices is perhaps a little greater than Willow’s but both still function as churches not as businesses. As for hypothesis 1, two different and unrelated churches relying on best practices and possessing decades-long track records of repeatedly hiring right fit pastors corroborates the linkage between using best practices, making better hires and realizing greater vision achievement.

This project has proposed, investigated, discussed and concluded that it is a combination of the spiritual and the social, a combination of biblical principles and best marketplace practices that if executed prayerfully and with discipline will more repeatedly yield right fit pastors, eventually improving any church’s level of vision achievement.

**Implications for Further Study**

After almost four years this ministry research project is wrapping up. I started it for primarily to grow and develop in my own hiring skills for use in my own local church. During the course of the study, however, it became increasingly clear to me that other churches struggled with hiring too. Frankly, none of us ever received an hour of training about it in seminary so whatever we may have learned about hiring we probably
learned from time spent in the marketplace – and that for good and for ill. My prayerful hope is that this ministry project has begun to shed some much needed new light onto a leadership issue many believe they have already mastered. Unfortunately, the data on pastoral tenure reveals that just the opposite is case. We all need to learn to hire better for the sake of the Savior and his cause. Therefore in this final section I want to share some of my own thoughts, some of which also suggest implications for further research.

This Process Works

I certainly did not invent this hiring process. But I do believe I am one of the first to express the process in terms of principles or resolutions that are anchored into the Scriptures, supplemented with state of the art best practices and synthesized into a simple and effective “how to” checklist that has been validated in two large churches. Over the past four years as an Executive Pastor I have also put this learning into practice at my local church and have seen – qualitatively speaking – a marked improvement in the caliber of pastor we are now hiring as well as realizing better alignment with our stated vision. In fact, of the six full-time pastors I have hired over the past four years one has left on great terms to become a senior pastor at another church while the other five are all still on our staff, are all doing incredible ministry and have no plans to leave. I am currently seeking two more pastors as of this writing, and already have a pretty clear idea of what I’m praying and looking for with both. I am definitely a satisfied customer when it comes to the conclusions gained from this ministry project.

From my research, two issues would be worthy of further study I think. The first is to validate the breadth of application of this hiring process beyond the sphere of the megachurch. Are there perhaps other factors at work in smaller or in larger congregations and staffs that have not been surfaced through this study? This could and probably should be researched to find out if there are scalability factors inherent within this process. The second area of research is to validate the depth of these conclusions. It
would be wise to conduct a longer-term quantitative rather than qualitative study on the 
tenure of executive-level pastors to see if following this process produced more, less or 
the same longevity than using another process or using no process at all. A quantitative 
study would add yet another level of reliability to these results.

A third implication that I think is also worthy of consideration is teaching 
some of this material to graduating seminarians. Most will be walking into the unknown 
in their first churches and many will be called upon to hire without even the most 
rudimentary grid through which to think about it. I think this project’s checklist would 
make a good primer on hiring in this kind of venue.

A final implication of this research applies to every church who prayerfully 
recruits Elders and/or Deacons. The Scriptures have essentially defined the target in 
terms of Character, Calling and Competence. Would it not be appropriate to write up a 
one page success profile for Elders and Deacons, then interview them against such a 
document? It would truly help the current boards do the due diligence to ensure their 
churches are led by biblically-qualified leaders.

**Balancing Structured Process and God’s Sovereignty**

Another take away from this ministry project has been learning to balance 
following a checklist with a prayerful dependence on God’s leading. I have not had the 
exact situation Rob Shearer related from Willow Creek about hiring someone he did not 
know he needed, but I have had one occasion where I had to conclude that God in his 
sovereignty knew better about one of my pastors than I did and so we moved him to a 
different role – where he has absolutely excelled. If I would have simply followed the 
letter of this hiring process I do not think he would be on our staff any longer, and that 
would be to our detriment.

I will reiterate here what I said in Chapter 2 about seeking this balance. As 
strategic and important as hiring well is to the local church, hiring pastors can never
become rote, mechanical or formulaic. Rather, hiring well and doing it repeatedly is a dynamic, Spirit-led process that combines God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility through both dependent prayer and diligent work. As fond as I may be of checklists, following checklists alone will not bring God’s “right fit” pastor to a local church. Hiring pastors is like a sovereign dance. Each hiring decision-maker must learn the steps, practice them until they become “second nature,” but finally and fully put themselves into the arms of their dance Partner, Who is after all leading the dance. I for one have to continue to learn to dance following God’s lead.

*Balancing Future Potential Versus Present Productivity*

Another of the key conclusions of this ministry project is being disciplined enough to accurately define the desired hiring target ahead of time. Knowing more exactly what is needed right now helps any hiring decision-maker pray more accurately and choose more astutely between candidates. Yet while I agree with this premise in the vast majority of cases, it has raised a question in my mind that I think bears further study: what percentage of pastors with seemingly high future potential should be a part of an otherwise specialized, presently productive staff? Is it wise to *only* hire pastors with a solid track record or is it also advisable to hire pastors who are as of yet untested but may be men of future high potential? In other words, how deep should a local church’s pastoral “bench” be?

The literature suggests that organizations should have at least some kind of bench depth or bench strength to follow an athletic analogy. What this means to a local church is that there might be one or two staff positions that are designated “entry” level and open to those with no to little experience, but to those who may have the “right stuff” to play more significant roles in the future. This would require each local church to more accurately define their particular staff DNA in order to hire those who already fit their core relational and working style values but who need to be “first tested” (1 Timothy
3:10) and developed. While the church would be potentially risking the price of an entry-level salary, it might be an investment in the long-term health and future of the ministry rather than simply an expense.

It would seem to be worthy of a case study or two to determine if and how churches that are already doing this has impacted their longer-term ability to realize their stated visions.

**Balancing Strategic Versus Tactical**

This ministry project has also concluded that hiring well repeatedly means using something like a success profile to more accurately and succinctly define not only the hiring target but 12-month ministry results. I believe forcing myself to be this clear about what “success” looks like one year from now is responsible for the majority of improvement in my hiring practice. Yet it has caused me to ask another question: how should a local church balance pursuing longer-term strategic goals with achieving shorter-term 12-month tactical goals? In other words, is it wise for a church to hire only for 12 to 18-month stints? Or is it wise instead to hire generalists instead of specialists, taking the potential reduction in creativity and/or performance of a specialist but gaining a longer-term pastor whose performance will be “good enough?”

The Body of Christ metaphor that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 12, the two churches studied in this ministry project and the literature all argue persuasively for hiring specialists rather than generalists. That is why God’s vision and our conviction should be to assemble diverse yet complementary teams. However, over my 12 years of experience as an Executive Pastor I have seen the need for having one “utility” player, a particular individual who carries our staff DNA yet who can move from role to role, usually for shorter periods of time.

In my opinion, it would be worthwhile knowing again what other churches that are increasingly realizing their stated visions have found in this regard. What
percentage of their pastoral staff are generalists and what percentage are specialists? In what roles are the utility players most effective and for how long? How is the transition made between a generalist and a specialist should that time come? I would think another two or three case studies on such a topic would be worth pursuing.

In conclusion, it is my sincere and prayerful hope that every church leader who reads this material will come away challenged yet motivated to strive to put the right man with the right gifts and talents in the right role and do it again and again to the glory of God and for the good of his people. Make your next hire a “right fit” hire.
Bill Egner: I think I just asked you a couple of questions. One, as a hiring professional, do you love that?

Bob Kaumeyer: Oh, man, I wish there was money in it. Go ahead.

Bill: What’s your opinion, or maybe you have data, what’s your opinion on the tenure of most of the guys you see placed from Dallas?

Bob: I’m going to answer it in two parts. The first part is historically, over the last 30 years, our guys have gone out to a Bible Church setting and normally have stayed there for a long period of time. In the last five years, started about 10 years ago but in the last five years there is a higher turnover rate. Three to five years, and they move on to something else.

Bill: Wow. Now that’s your impression or you really know that’s a trend that’s happening?

Bob: It’s a trend that I see in ones that come back into placement.

Bill: You see a lot of repeat …

Bob: I also work with other churches, other placement groups, and it’s something that’s going on. In fact, it would not surprise me if I actually did research on it to find that these guys are probably going to be in four to five churches over the next 30 years instead of staying at one.

Bill: Wow:

Bob: If it grows … if they go there and it begins to grow and that happens in the first 2-3 years, let’s say it moves from 50-100 people to 300, and then it will continue growing, the likelihood that they’ll stay put goes up, but that’s a very small percentage of churches.

Bill: What would you guess, or maybe you know, why do they leave?

Bob: Well, my assumption and my instinct from watching everything is that they’re looking for something better. They come out of seminary. They’ve watched a lot of the
megachurches around us, they’ve watched a lot of growth in activity and they want the same thing. Only realizing that those churches grew up over the last 30 years, they want to do it in the next two to five years. And I think that’s a cultural thing more than anything else.

**Bill:** How much of it would you guess is a mis-hire? What the church thought they were looking for is not what they got. Nobody checked. Nobody cared. They brought the person in and …

**Bob:** Well, I don’t think it was a mis-hire. I think everybody was talking the same words, but they had different meanings to the same words. In other words, a lot of smaller churches today want to bring in a young person who is going to help them grow, who is going to help them reach people. However, you have to remember that certain churches, especially in the 100-150 size that have been established for a while, their likelihood of growing to something bigger is very small. They have a group of people who are meeting a need, but rather than that being a situation that they’re content with, not the church but the pastor who’s going into it, he might have this vision for reaching, there might be 2000 new homes nearby the church. Well, he wants to reach all the people in those new homes. Well, you’ve got to ask the hard question, why hasn’t the church done that already and already have that going? So he comes in to reach out. He may even start some small groups in those homes. And the people who come to that won’t necessary come to the “church” but they like what’s going on and they like learning about Jesus Christ. They like being taught the Word of God in a home setting. So they’ll have an outreach, but will they come into the church then to begin to function as that church is structured? And I think that’s where the tension is.

**Bill:** Say that same thing in a slightly different way.

**Bob:** Alright. I believe that the people we are graduating now have a desire to reach the lost culture. Our culture is very lost and growing rapidly. If we do not begin to address that in the next 5-10 years, the true biblical church is going to grow smaller and smaller because we are not actively engaging the lost culture, we are not actively engaging those lost people, we’re not actively discipling them when they are saved to bring them to maturity in Christ to reach their neighbors and friends.

**Bill:** And so the Dallas graduate is going into that church. He understands himself well enough. The church isn’t doing … This is where I’m getting this mis-hire thing. The church really doesn’t know itself and therefore doesn’t know what it’s looking for?

**Bob:** Exactly. That’s what I’m saying.

**Bill:** And so, if I can pin it on anyone, and please understand what I’m trying to do. I’m not throwing anybody under the bus. My dissertation, my hypothesis goes along these lines: that great churches, when you apply Jim Collins’ Nonprofit Greatness, that great churches, part of what has made them great, is they have learned how to hire great. Okay? They’ve learned how to hire very, very well over a long period of time.
**Bob:** That’s right. And grown, so the ones they had when they were smaller they couldn’t rehire for their larger staff positions.

**Bill:** I think part of growing a church, when you look at the two case studies I’ve done, one at Fellowship Little Rock – a great church – they’ve learned to hire well. And I got a case study done with Willowcreek. Whatever you think of Willowcreek they are, you know a great church and they’ve learned. They don’t hire perfectly, but they’ve learned how to hire well. That’s been a key contributing factor to their longevity not only on their own people but in their community.) What I’m trying to get at in some of these things, when a Gary McIntosh writes you got 3-4 years and these guys, you know there’s a revolving door basically. I don’t necessarily pin that on the guy; I pin that on the church. The church doesn’t know what it’s looking for.

**Bob:** Exactly. They don’t know who they are either.

**Bill:** Yeah, they don’t know who they are, so they don’t know what they’re really looking for.

**Bob:** They wouldn’t know it if it won’t through the door and laid it all out. They’d throw them out and say we want somebody who’s going to grow us in two years.

**Bill:** Do you think the church really wants that?

**Bob:** Yes.

**Bill:** So they so, grow us, grow us, but the truth is, you try and grow us and our cultural DNA will sweep you downstream.

**Bob:** That’s correct, because the church may not even know their cultural DNA, but they enforce it on a regular basis.

**Bill:** Oh, they can’t help but enforce it.

**Bob:** That’s right.

**Bill:** Very interesting.

**Bob:** Because, the other thing that’s happening today is that small churches are disappearing while we sit here and talk. They are rapidly shrinking and I wish I had stats before me, but I saw something two months ago about Willowcreek, and they admitted that 90% of their people had been in churches before. And that’s a staggering figure, but it doesn’t surprise me because people go there, they are getting a solid message, they’re getting evangelism, they’re doing a lot of things that their church should have been doing.
Bill: What you’re saying is really interesting. According to literature and Fellowship and Willowcreek, as if you care, but you’re going to hear it anyway. One of the keys that the literature talks about and Fellowship and Willowcreek as examples have embraced, is they really have a conviction to get the hiring thing right. They’ve really moved to the place of saying, we kind of have a sense of who we are and we know we have to get it right. And I’m not sure that every church holds that.

Bob: Well, my only concern about what you’re saying on that is they may have their convictions, but you have to take a look at their own staff figures and see how many people actually stay in that environment. If it’s a healthy environment, they get days off, they get leave time and they’re not consumed by a way of life that the church expects, you’ll have staff longevity. But if you have a rotating door on your staff that isn’t much longer then 3-5 years, they you have to be careful about some of the statements you make.

Bill: Meaning …

Bob: Well, when you say that they have a great staff at the church, do you actually know how long the staff stays there? Has anybody done their homework on that? They may have 235 staff members, but how many of them have been replaced in the last five years?

Bill: Yeah. There’s lots of good studies down this road.

Bob: Uh-huh, because the guy at the top is going to stay put because he’s King Kong and he has the power. But I know that at Willowcreek he has rotated through several of his top staff on a regular basis. They just can’t keep up that pace. And those are some stats that you need to pull together.

Bill: Well, yeah, I don’t know if I’m going to do that.

Bob: Okay, that’s fine.

Bill: I asked both Fellowship and Willowcreek for numbers like that and neither one said they had anything like that, nor did they intend on getting them.

Bob: They’ve got them; they’ve got them.

Bill: Don _____ already told me if I can’t prove it, don’t go there, so that’s why I have to go to a criteria of greatness that’s somewhere else.

Bob: Well the other thing is, you have to define what you’re looking for in greatness. In other words, not all small churches are bad, either. They’re small for a reason. They’re meeting needs, and if the guy that is shepherding is called there and it’s a God-thing, then leave them alone. I know when I came here to Dallas Seminary in 1967, it was a different world. If you had a church then that had 1000 people, it was unbelievable, unheard of. Well, today it’s 1000? You’ve got that little thing going. You know, that’s
all a matter of perspective. But we also used to have a church on every corner here in Dallas and they could afford a pastor.

**Bill:** Give me two minutes on the trend, it seems to me, of using professional recruiters.

**Bob:** My problem with professional recruiters is they are in it to make money, and that’s my big problem with them. They can come in and lay out their doctrine, lay out their spiritual interest and everything else, but if these guys are going to get $2-3K for getting somebody hired, they’re really in it for the money. So the other thing that I see is that you have to be careful that you don’t compromise the spiritual and biblical principles of looking for a godly man, not a person who can get the job done. That’s a secular mindset. And my concern is that a lot of job recruiters have adapted and bought into and bled over the recruitment processes or the secular world. So again you can look for certain people for certain positions. My concern with it is, are they biblical, are they spiritual, are they people of prayer, are they growing in Christ? If they’re not doing any of those four, then why are you hiring them? Well, they get numbers in. They’re going to make our place grow. Well, is that even concerned or considered in the New Testament? No. Numbers is not important. What is important is a walk and a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Bill:** Do you think they are able to bring in a higher quality person?

**Bob:** What do you mean by higher quality?

**Bill:** Well, let’s say what I mean by that is somebody whose character and shape is better suited for that role than somebody they might know.

**Bob:** Well, if you’re going to look at character and you’re going to look at shape, you have to define what you mean by shape.

**Bill:** Right. I’m using Rick Warren’s term.

**Bob:** I know exactly what you’re doing. How you love it!

**Bill:** You’re just going to drive over my dissertation back and forth.

**Bob:** I haven’t spun the wheels yet.

**Bill:** I can hear the engine revving, though.

**Bob:** Yeah, well I put it in low, buddy. Watch out.

**Bill:** What’s interesting is the church literature for the past 10 years has written the exact thing. The church literature is writing almost identically to the business community right now.
Bob: That’s exactly it. And the problem with that is the person in the pew is not stupid, and once they wake up to that reality, my big concern is in another 5-10 years you’re going to see a lot of people checking out because you have maybe 20-30 churches with big gurus but the ones that are older, they’re not grooming anyone to come in and take their place. So when they go, you’re going to have some major adjustments and I don’t know that there’s anybody out there that’s going to be able to step up to start hitting homeruns. I don’t know that I answered your question, but …

Bill: No, it was good dialogue. You’re definitely pushing back on some things that I’ve got, but that’s not bad.

Bob: You were asking me, and I’m telling you.

Bill: You know what I want you to do. I want you to say, oh, Bill, you’re great. But you didn’t do that. You’re pushing back on me, and that’s okay. You’re a big boy and so am I. I can take it, and it causes me to think, so I do appreciate it. You did answer my question in how long people are staying, and you did answer my question that the majority of the responsibility for the misfit or whatever is the church not the guy. It’s the church.

Bob: Yeah, because one of the phenomenon that I’m seeing going on, and you haven’t even touched on it, is that we’re talking about established churches. There is a lot of, we used to call them mission churches, but church starting and planting is going on in a tidal wave all over the place, and I’m not sure except as I talk to some of these individuals and some of them have a real walk with the Lord, others I’m not sure what they’re doing, but the interesting thing is that there’s a phenomenon happening. They don’t want buildings, they don’t want pews, they don’t want choirs and hymnbooks and organs, but they want the Lord. They want prayer. They’re willing to send missionaries, and they want to reach the lost. They’re willing to go into the inner-city, and that’s an interesting phenomenon that’s going on.

Bill: How do you see that through your office?

Bob: I see that because of the amount of information that I process and some of the young people come in or I contact all of our grads and I ask them where are you, and what are you doing? And when I began pursuing them a little bit further, I find out that they’re in this type of ministry setting, it’s part time right now, and a year later they call me up and say “they’ve got me on full-time salary. We’re going to keep doing it.” And they’re meeting at the X-Bar M Junior High School. And they set up every Sunday. They’re running 124 people and they don’t worry about land of whatever. They still want to reach lost people and they still keep adding their numbers. But I don’t have the statistics to validate all that except that I know it’s going on. I’m not the only one. I talk to other guys in other places. Now the down side of it is, if you have somebody who goes out and doesn’t have a certain skill set or somebody to come alongside them, they’re gone within a year. They can burn out real quick if they’re not careful.
Bill: For right now, you’ve given me way more to think about than I wanted to. You’ve been good for me, as always.
APPENDIX B

COMPARING A TRADITIONAL JOB DESCRIPTION
TO A SUCCESS FACTOR PROFILE

_job description_

Vice President of Sales and Marketing

_position summary_

Reports to President and manages internal and external sales teams to increase company’s sales growth in all major markets.

- Develop and implement strategic and tactical sales plans.
- Proactively develop new business opportunities that leverage company’s technical capabilities.
- Coordinate internal resources to provide best-in-class pre- and post-sales service and support to our customers.

_responsibilities_

- Responsible for overall performance of company’s sales team and the continued expansion of sales of the company’s product line of software/hardware development tools and boundary-scan test equipment.
- Development of new business and product opportunities for the company.
- Responsible for recruiting, managing, and coordinating efforts of independent rep firms and distributors in support of sales opportunities.
- Oversee marketing programs including management and implementation of demand creation programs, customer intelligence marketing, and customer communications programs.
- Conduct product presentations and demonstrations, online via the Web, at the customer’s location and at industry meetings.
- Travel to customer sites for sales calls and technical presentations. Participate in industry trade shows and seminars as required.
**Success Factor Profile**

Vice President of Sales and Marketing

*Success Factor 1:* Within twelve months, increase sales by 15% over the prior year.
- Develop a tactical sales plan for the next fiscal year for existing markets and products within two months from which 50% of the increase in sales will be generated.
- Create within three months a plan of action to enter the telecommunications and medical device markets and achieve a goal of $6 million before the end of the next fiscal year, representing 25% of the sales objective.
- Effectively launch within four months a new product coming out of R&D now which represents a revolutionary advancement over competitor products. Effective launch will be defined as the product generating $6 million before the end of the next fiscal year.

*Success Factor 2:* Implement a sales infrastructure to effectively manage the sales activities and process within twelve months.
- Within one month, create a sales pipeline forecasting tool that is within 10% accuracy on a monthly basis.
- Within three months, develop a structured process for sales call tracking, reporting, weekly updates, and one-to-one meetings with each subordinate.
- Within six months, implement group and individual sales training. Develop a scorecard to measure each Regional Sales Manager in his or her sales ability and product knowledge.

*Success Factor 3:* Develop a Strategic three-year plan ensuring 15% growth year-over-year beginning in next Fiscal Year.
- Conduct a comprehensive product optimization review within three months. Identify products to be discontinued, new products to be added and additional products requiring substantial engineering resources to upgrade/improve.
- Identify within six months at least one new market to enter in each fiscal year that will generate annualized revenues of at least $15 million at 15% EBIT.
- Conduct an acquisition study within twelve months to target potential acquisitions that will fill the gap between the 15% targeted growth rate and organic growth.
APPENDIX C

EXAMPLE OF AN OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

Grace Covenant Church, Austin, Texas

_Director of Children’s Education Pastor of Children’s Education_

Grace Covenant Church is looking for a Director or Pastor of Children’s Education. This person will strategically oversee and direct the large and growing Children’s Education ministry that is vital to the health of the congregation. By equipping and leading paid staff and ministers (at Grace, every member is a minister), this person will impact every adult and child at the church.

_Austin & the Flavor of Grace Covenant_

Grace Covenant Church (www.grace360.com) is a dynamic and rapidly growing conservative evangelical church in the north-west section of Austin. The city of Austin has a population of 700,000 and a metropolitan population of over 1,400,000. The character of Austin is reflected in Grace Covenant Church:

- Austin is home of one of America’s largest universities—The University of Texas at Austin has over 50,000 students. At Grace, these attributes are reflected in penetrating biblical sermons that reach the mind, will and intellect. Members are trained in a strong Protestant tradition—to read and understand the Bible for themselves. A very large number of adults have collegiate or graduate degrees. Relating to families, Grace has a large number of private and home schooled children.

- The city government of Austin calls itself “the live music capital of the world.” At Grace, the two “contemporary” and one “classic” worship services contain teams of outstanding musicians, many of whom have professional music careers outside of church.

- Austin is the seat of the government for the state of Texas—with a feeling of influence beyond the city borders. At Grace, local and international missions are important, having a ministry to those beyond our church grounds. Relating to Children’s Education, missions is a regular “center” in the teaching and ministry program.

- Austin has a motto to support city business and culture, “Keep Austin Weird: collaborative fission of coordinated individualism.” Grace has what few churches have, an openness to diversity—accepting people for who they are
and how God is drawing them to Himself. Relating to parents, we see this individualism in many female professionals leaving their careers to raise their children; there is a very large proportion of stay-at-home Moms in the congregation.

A church is called to model its ministry and ministers after Christ (at Grace each member is a minister). A church is also called to be relevant to its society, “to seek and save the lost.” Grace tenaciously holds to its biblical beliefs and core values.

Vision of Grace Covenant Church

Every church needs to have a vision statement that answers the question—“Why do we exist?” Grace filters every program, budget request and idea through its vision statement. If whatever is planned doesn’t help meet the vision, then it isn’t done.

Grace Covenant Church exists to glorify God by leading people to Christ and presenting each believer mature in Christ. Grace desires to be “a courageous church, where every believer is a minister, equipped and united, to impact people for Christ, for the glory of God.”

• Our lives and ministries are to be Christ-centered, reflecting the following values in balance:
  • The Bible: we desire to hold and teach Biblical truth unequivocally. (Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 4:2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Revelations 22:18-19)
  • Prayer and Worship: we desire to have a deep personal and congregational relationship with God through meaningful prayer, praise and worship. (Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 22:37; Psalm 63:1-6; John 15:7)
  • Community: we desire to relate biblically and with love toward one another using our Covenant of Fellowship as our basis. (Ephesians 4:1-6; John 1:3; Hebrews 10:24-25)
  • Evangelism and Global Outreach: we desire to share the Gospel boldly by life and by word. (John 17:24; 1 Peter 3:15; Acts 1:8; Matthew 19:19; Romans 1:16; Matthew 28:19-20)

Grace Covenant uses a “3 Cog” motif for explaining how members learn in different sized groups. The first cog is “Worship,” where every member can participate in corporate worship—which can be continued in private and family worship. The worship services are designed for believers in Christ to worship the triune God. Seekers and “de-churched” people are welcome to see how Christians worship in Word and Truth. The second cog is “Learning.” The medium-sized Sunday Adult Learning Communities are vital to the growth of members, prayer and fellowship. The third cog is “Connection.” These small groups emphasize study of the sermon, relationships and doing ministry together.

The Organization
The church emerged from a home Bible study in 1968. The first study was on the biblical covenants, culminating with the “grace covenant” and so the name of the independent Bible church. In 2005, the ministry celebrated its 36th year. Early pastors were Dick Flaten and Max Anders, followed by Jim Rose. Matt Cassidy became Senior Pastor in 2002, having served on the staff for 13 years in other positions.

Today, the community of Grace Covenant includes over 2,000 adults. The three worship services—a “classic” service at 8:00 and “contemporary” services at 9:30 and 11:00 am draw more than 1,100 people each week: the new worship center will seat 1700 on the bottom floor and another 700 on the balcony. There are over 360 in Children’s Education and 250 in the Attic (7-12 grades). Midweek AWANA attracts over 200 kids. There are over 35 home study groups, called Impact Groups that continue the study from the Sunday sermon. 14 Adult Learning Communities and 10 Introductory/ Equipping Classes allow people to gather on Sunday morning in medium-sized groups for study, prayer and fellowship. Local and International Missions is also important at the church, with a significant amount of people and funds being invested each year.

**Strategic Priorities**

Grace Covenant is a church on the move—literally. After two years of careful study, in 2004 the leadership set forth a plan to rebuild almost every building on the church campus. The goal was to accomplish this Herculean feat without the use of long-term debt. Over eight million dollars were pledged for the first phase of the project: a new office building for staff, renovation of the old office building for Children’s Ministry and a new 2400 seat worship center.

- In the spring of 2005, the congregation pledged $8,000,000 for the new building. In order to build the new building, the existing Christian School was closed. An adjacent office building was purchased for staff offices and renamed the Grace360 building.
- In the summer of 2005, the staff moved from the Cornerstone building into the new Grace360 building.
- In the fall of 2005, two floors of the Cornerstone building will be renovated into Early Childhood facilities.
- In the winter of 2005-spring 2006, the old Children’s Education building will be demolished.
- In the summer-fall of 2006, the new worship center will break ground.

Grace is a church that is planning for the future—including the staff needed as the church grows. The Director/Pastor of Children’s Education is a vital part of the staffing needs at the church. Future positions include a Pastor of Contemporary Worship and positions reporting to our Youth Pastor.

**Dedicated to Giving**

Few churches have a history of such dedicated giving. The leaders of the church have made a commitment to give ten percent of their income to Grace Covenant. The percentage of donations to members/attendees is among the top 1% in the United States.
Reporting Relationships

The Director or Pastor will report to one of the Executive Pastors. Grace has a three person executive team, consisting of the Senior Pastor and two Executive Pastors.

Pastor or Director

The candidate is free to choose whether to apply for the Pastor or Director position. The theology of Grace Covenant Church allows only for men to be pastors, able to teach and shepherd at the congregational level (this view will shortly be examined and may or may not be changed). Men applying for the pastoral position must have commensurate seminary training and church experience.

Men and women applying for the Director position need not have seminary training and may have a degree and experience outside of church ministry. The Director might be a school administrator or have other educational experience.

Primary Function

The Pastor or Director will respond to a genuine call from God to:

- Strategically lead the Children’s Education department. Help shape and implement a shared vision and strategy to grow and strengthen the Children’s Education department in alignment with the mission of the church. Servant leaders at Grace are inspirational, relational and collaborative.

- Guide the Children’s Education department annual planning and ensure that the plan is implemented effectively and appropriately.

- Oversee the stewardship of people and material resources in Children’s Education, maximizing the investment of each person in the ministry. In this, promote to the congregation the value of investing in the lives of children.

- Build strong leaders and effective teams of ministers in Children’s Education (at Grace, every member is a minister). Proactively seek and build leaders according to their giftedness. Give direction to the leaders and ministers by clearly communicating vision and strategy on a regular basis. Conduct classes on concrete subjects as teaching skills, policy and procedures.

- For parents: maximize the opportunity for Grace to equip and train parents to know and follow biblical principles for parenting. Work with the Pastors and teachers to aid in the development of parenting skills.

- For children: provide an infrastructure for the biblical education of infant through 6th grade. Grace is not a place to “baby sit” children but to introduce Christ and Christ-like living. This includes the Sunday School, AWANA, childcare and Backyard Vacation Bible School programs.

- Recruit, challenge, train and develop current and future people to become part of the Children’s Ministry program as staff, leaders and ministers.
• Oversee the paid staff: Administrative Assistant, Nursery Coordinator, Preschool Coordinator, Childcare Coordinator.

Additional Duties and Responsibilities
• Assess the current needs of the congregation for growth in Children’s Education.
• Be informed of trends and culture as it relates to Children’s Education.
• Develop effective relationships with congregational leaders and key volunteers
• Ensure that conflicts and complaints within the department and staff are quickly identified and resolved in a biblical manner

Education & Theology
• The Pastor will have a Master of Divinity Degree or similar advanced degree. This should include coursework or training in human development.
• The Director will have a degree in Education with coursework in pedagogy, human development and administration.
• The candidate will have a history of an ongoing program of personal and professional development.
• The candidate will have a theological base shaped by conservative evangelical theology and can agree with the church’s doctrinal statement.

Experience
• The Pastor candidate may have experience in a multiple staff church setting, with a minimum of 5 years ministry experience.
• This Director candidate may be a department head at a large church or an administrator in a public or private school, with 5 years experience. This may be a lateral move from an education-based para-church ministry.

Key Competencies/Attributes
• A born-again Christian with integrity, high moral values and a genuine call from God to this church and position.
• A highly effective relational leader who inspires, motivates and mobilizes others to strive for and attain dreams and goals that are bigger than they thought possible. A leader who can balance strategic leadership with operational management. A leader who can inspire others with vision so as to achieve desired results. A sensitive leader who is aware of this multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-generational congregation.
• A skilled manager who can plan, budget, delegate, allocate resources and meet deadlines on time and under budget.
• A skilled communicator, with keen listening skills and effective oral and written communications.
• A mature, self-sacrificing and driven team player. One who is committed to the success of the ministry and others.

Compensation & Commitment
Compensation will be commensurate with the principal of an Elementary school in Texas. A relocation budget will be provided. Grace desires a candidate who will invest the next 7-10 years, or more, in this position.

Contact
Please e-mail your resume and a cover letter to:
Dr. David Fletcher, dfletcher@gccaustin.org
All e-mails will receive an initial response within 48 hours and a determination of status within 10 days.
APPENDIX D

POTENTIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
USED FOR THE PROJECT

• Tell me about your hiring philosophy, if you have one (e.g. Howard Hendrick's "FAT"; my Oreo cookie illustration; etc.)
• Which elements have turned out to be more important for your long-term success?
• If it's "chemistry" how have you discovered your organizational DNA to be able to identify a good "fit"?
• Tell me about your hiring process. (what comes first, second, etc.)
• Written position description?
• What does that look like?
• Does it include expressing organizational DNA and/or core values beyond the competencies required?
• Do you collect resumes (who, based on what?)
• Do you use an application (internal, standardized, written?)
• Do you check references (who, how many, standardized questionnaire?)
• Do you use any instruments (DiSC, Your Unique Design, Strength Finders) on your candidates?
• How do you check for DNA "fit"?
• Who does the down-selecting and how?
• Who participates in the interviewing process?
• Are the decision-makers involved in the process from the start or only after a while?
• How do you go about debriefing on each candidate?
• Who has the final authority to make the hire?
• Does he/they do the interviewing or do they take the recommendation of someone else?
• Is it an individual or a committee?
• Do you interview the spouse/children?
• Does the chief interviewer possess any special qualities or qualifications or Divine Design?
• Samples of anything you use in the process?
• What did you go through in your hiring process?
• What does the "ideal" candidate look like?
• Where do you look for candidates: from within or without?
• What "unexpected" things have you run into that might have become part of your hiring DNA?
• What "rules of thumb" do you use in hiring?
• Do you have a probationary period?
• Do you have an orientation session or sessions? (probationary period with early markers for fit, performance, "success")
• What about hiring people with previous relationships with someone (maybe the pastor) on staff?
• What about hiring family members?
APPENDIX E

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH INTERVIEW
PERMISSION AND TRANSCRIPT

“Combining biblical principles and best business practices for hiring ‘right fit’ pastors.”


The purpose of this research project is to discover the beliefs and practices of expert practitioners in large evangelical churches or institutions specifically responsible for hiring pastors.

Interviews will be digitally recorded to ensure accuracy of information, quotes, and meanings in context. (Participants will be given copies of transcripts upon request.)

The responses of participants will be used in a doctoral dissertation describing the project, the findings, and the suggestions for application. The dissertation (including material from the interviews) will be submitted for credit toward a Doctor of Ministry degree at Dallas Theological Seminary. The dissertation (including material from interviews) may also be adapted and used in the future for conference presentations or print publications.

The names of all participants as well as their churches will be used “as is” in the dissertation only. For subsequent presentations and/or publications, pseudonyms will be substituted upon request to provide confidentiality.

Please substitute the following pseudonyms outside the boundaries of the dissertation…
For me:
For my church:

I understand and acknowledge my informed consent regarding this project,
Name: Ken Dean (8/29/2010)
Part One

Bill Egner: I want this to be fun. You were kind to me and let me share some things with you before you left town. Now I want you to return the favor to me and tell me some things I don’t know. Hopefully we’re going to dialog, talk back and forth about questions I sent you. Hopefully it will be a guide, but we may wander down other trails. I don’t know. I don’t have a particular agenda, just so we can kind of talk about hiring. My premise in this whole thing is that good churches that have been good for a number of years, like 20 or more, have learned something about hiring for that long-term, good to great, built to last. Fellowship has learned something about hiring that the evangelical church could learn from. So in thinking through those questions that I sent you on that email, I don’t know if you’ve gotten those or looked at them.

Ken Dean: I have them in front of me now.

Bill: Those are the questions that come to my mind, that I think if I could get these in paper form and share them, not only with Christ Chapel but with other churches in Fort Worth that would say, “this makes us hire better, sustains our ministry 1, 2, 5, 10 years longer.” So I think the premise is right. What I need is the inside experts who say, “this is what we do, this is how we do it, here are some rules of thumb. If you do these three things, you’re dead. Here’s the poison water you can drink.” And try to steer me away from the brackish ponds and lead me to the Promised Land. So, one of the ways I thought we could start out, just to get the conversation rolling, was do you have a hiring philosophy? You’ve heard Howard Hendricks, he looks for people who are FAT: faithful, available, teachable. You’ve heard me talk about my little Oreo cookie thing before. The bottom chocolate part is character, the top chocolate part is competence and the white squishy stuff, that good stuff, that middle part is chemistry, and we put a lot of emphasis on chemistry. That’s kind of what our philosophy is. Does Fellowship have a philosophy? What is written down or unwritten, but true nonetheless.

Ken: You know, I’m not sure that we do. We look for all those things and we talk through those things, too. We talk about character and chemistry and competence a lot. We don’t have our own acronym. I’d say it’s probably more a part of our DNA to be pretty thorough to evaluate and that the other characteristics that we probably add to that are natural wiring. We’re real big on trying to evaluate natural tendencies that are not necessarily important to us even though we may include a lot of evaluation of life, work and spiritual experience as part of the right person for the job. But we do a lot of testing and we lean on testing a lot. We use different kinds of instruments in testing, but the primary language and primary instrument we use around here is something called Servants by Design.

Bill: Right. That’s the astronaut one?

Ken: Yeah, it’s the astronaut one. We had some guys in our body, a couple of doctors who took that and translated it into a kind of more spiritually-oriented set of languages.
Bill: Medical doctors or Ph.D. doctors?

Ken: Both. One is a dentist, actually. The other one is a psychologist. I don’t really know the story behind all that, but they did a good job of developing a version of it that applies for church and kind of translated it into Christian language.

Bill: So, I think we heard the story when we came to the I-Squared Conference a few years ago that someone, maybe outside the church, had developed a test that NASA was using among others, and that these two guys came along and said, “Hey, this would be really cool to do for our church. They adapted it and then they put it on-line. Right?

Ken: Yes, it’s an on-line deal. When we get through here this afternoon, at 2:00 I’m going to a 1-1/2 day seminar to teach me how to interpret these scores.

Bill: Because you are going to be . . .

Ken: I’m going to be certified in this.

Bill: Because part of what my questions were, just for conversation purposes, is to walk me through your hiring process, because I think that gives me some insight into Fellowship’s process, plus it’s somewhat fresh in your mind.

Ken: Uh huh.

Bill: But now you become one of the key hirers, right?

Ken: Right. I’ve already done that for several positions and used this tool and have had others help me interpret and teach me kind of the Cliff Notes version of these things but then also bring in some of the other tools of analysis that I’ve used working with other churches for this, but it’s our primary tool. These guys developed it several years ago. It worked real well here, and they even developed other tools based on this tool for marriage and for parenting.

Bill: Are those proprietary? I mean, you could buy those on line?

Ken: Those are probably available on line through the same website or resources, but they’re taught as equipping classes. One of them is called “Marriage by Design” and the other one is called “Parenting by Design.” It’s a matter of going through the discovery of these wirings for your spouse and for your children and then helping you understand what that means and how to relate to those family members.

Bill: When I kind of look at my philosophy question, would you say that natural wiring is the best predictor of fit or something like that?
Ken: I would say it is not a predictor of fit that we would use outside of other evaluation criteria, but it is probably one of the things that we will weight the heaviest.

Bill: So if there’s a pie chart that would represent all the things that would go into making the decision, would this one have more than 50% of the weight? Or would it be more like, there are probably four key things that go into it, and this would probably be about 25%?

Ken: Wow, it’s hard to answer that. I could answer it this way. It’s probably 25-33% of it, but I could also say it’s 65-70% in this, if we were to look at some . . . let’s say we had three candidates and they had equal competency, equal chemistry, equal experience, equal what we can discern about character, and one of them tested much better than the others on their wiring, then we would probably go with that person. In the same regard, let’s say we had one person and they had good scores on everything, but we look at their wiring and it indicates something that looks like it’s not going to be a good fit for this job, they we wouldn’t hire them. I’m not sure ... it’s easy to quantify it that way, but we rely on it very heavily. Personally, it’s an area I was aligned with Fellowship on because I was led to these same conclusions independent of working with Fellowship a number of years ago as well. The first work I remember getting my attention about this kind of topic is a book by Art Miller. He wrote it in partnership with Bill Hendricks. It was Art Miller’s concepts, thought. The title of the book is “Why You Can’t Be Anything You Want To Be.”

Bill: Yeah, I haven’t read it, but I’ve heard about it.

Ken: It’s worth having in your library. I’d say the first half of the book is the one that explains most of the principles.

Bill: But I absolutely agree with it. You cannot be anything you want to be.

Ken: Right, right. In a nutshell they just said you were born with certain characteristics, or your personality, of what you could do, that are easy for you, that are natural for you. They are things that come out starting early in your childhood. They are the way you are able to have some success at different things, and these characteristics or tendencies or strengths are just things that are natural to you. You were born with these abilities. Not only that, but they have to come out. They are part of who you are.

Bill: Yeah, they’re going to come out whether you want them to or not.

Ken: And so this Service by Design, it doesn’t necessarily look at the strengths part as much as it does just at the natural wiring. It’s a little bit broader categories than what Gallup Strength Finders does, but I’m a real big fan of Gallup Strength Finders, too, as an additional tool.

Bill: Okay. Would it be fair if I were going to say after you and I talked about this and that in your philosophy, how many parts would you say would go into a pie chart? And
what would those parts be named? We kind of said character, competence. Would chemistry be this one, or would chemistry be something different than this one?

**Ken:** I think it would be different. I would say this: at least five and I have to think about it. There might be more. It would be character, competence, chemistry, natural wiring and personality. Personality and natural wiring would probably be inter-related.

**Bill:** Chemistry would be chemistry with the team?

**Ken:** Yes, chemistry with the team; chemistry with the church; chemistry with what we’re asking them to do. We don’t write a real tight set of bumpers on chemistry. We’re not necessarily looking for everybody to think alike. In fact, we’re not looking for everybody to think alike. We’re not looking for every nearly as tight a doctrinal consistency as probably you guys would be. But we are looking for something that’s not going to change the DNA of our church either.

**Bill:** Would it be fairer, better, more accurate to say what I call chemistry is more like your ministry, your church DNA?

**Ken:** Uh-huh. Church DNA, leadership DNA, operational DNA – how we operate and those around us.

**Bill:** And then the person brings some experience level to it as well as the natural wiring and personality.

**Ken:** That’s a fair way to describe it.

**Bill:** Do we like this person? Do they have a personality we think will mesh as well as do they have our DNA already bubbling out of them? So character, competence, something like church or leadership DNA, then experience, natural wiring and personality. You’d say those things all kind of go together.

**Ken:** The reason I’m distinguishing personality from natural wiring is that natural wiring has a few components to it and one would be what is your natural tendency for inter-relational activity, you know. What are you like? Do you gravitate toward detail? Do you gravitate toward people and relationships? Do you gravitate toward, using the DISC profile, domineering and decision making?

**Bill:** That wouldn’t be personality?

**Ken:** That’s more personality and then I think there’s another thing in wiring. So you can break wiring down into personality and then into natural strengths. Let’s take natural wiring in the broad category for both strengths and personality.
Bill: So under natural wiring, if that were a piece of the pie, you’d say under natural wiring there is some instrument that you use for personality like a DISC. There’d be some experiences?

Ken: No, I’d say that’s not experience. It would be natural abilities, unlearned abilities.

Bill: Unlearned abilities. Alright, now, that’s a good one. That’ll preach, baby. That’s good. So natural wiring has a personality component and then it has an unlearned abilities component.

Ken: Some secular examples of organizations that have really developed a whole business around identifying and helping people discover unlearned abilities would be Johnson-O’Connor. They’re in Dallas and do like 2.5 days of testing. And Ames which also does about 2.5 days of testing. People have been going to them for several years or sending their kids to them to help them understand how they were put together and, therefore, what kinds of work, careers and work environments that they may be suited to.

Bill: Under the church or leadership DNA, would you say that’s as much a vision DNA, a ministry vision DNA as anything else?

Ken: You know, I think that vision/mission DNA can be, because certainly I think it can be a component of it. Common call or personal call toward topics related to that job assignment or related to kind of the macro cause of the church, that would be a contributor for evaluating if you have a fit. I’d say maybe there are some cases where maybe the first time they’re hearing it, the first time that they are interviewing with you and they connect with it and like it so it’s not necessarily something they’re carrying with them. But I think yes, it is. It’s not necessarily the primary thing, but it could be.

Bill: You’ve been there what? About a year?

Ken: Yes.

Bill: Did you walk in and say I know what the organizational organism DNA is in this place, and so I know how to hire for it? Did you get a paper that said we want an entrepreneurial spirit, a piece of paper like that? How do you become the next in line, the gatekeeper in a sense not only of that organizational but the organism’s DNA?

Ken: That’s a great question, and that’s a hard question to answer. Let me do it by just telling a little bit of my story as it relates to coming here. Early on there was a connection made with some of the leadership here at a conference, and we just got stuck in an airport together and had a lot of time together, and I interviewed them for an article. We had enough time together to be able to learn a little bit about each other, me learn a little bit about them personally and about FBCLR. Them to learn a little bit about me and who I was and what my consulting services were. But there was a connection, and soon after that they had a question about facilities development and wanted to bring me in to do just one day of consulting, and so in that we learned a little bit more about each other,
and there was more connection. About eight months later they brought me in to help them think through re-locating their church and decided there was enough connection there and there was enough competency and experience with me that they would just hire my consulting on a regular basis to help them lead their relocation effort, make the early plans, develop budgets, develop teams and that sort of thing. So each of these progressive meetings was a discovery and a connection between myself and the organization area of me providing the competency they needed through a filter of understanding, of confidence that I understood who they were in the past but also what they needed to become in the future in order to carry their DNA forward and to carry it forward into a future world.

**Bill:** In other words, if I can say it this way, Fellowship over the past 30 years has developed a spiritual momentum in a direction. And you, by God’s purpose and calling, were going already in that direction.

**Ken:** I’d say there was a lot of alignment with that.

**Bill:** And you were, even though the preferable future is somewhat undefined, and you brought a missing competence that they needed to imagine the preferred future together. But there is a sense of momentum that says the future looks like it’s in this direction. It’s not 90 degrees to the left; it’s not 90 degrees to the right. The spiritual momentum is along this direction, this trajectory.

**Ken:** I think so. I think that maybe even a different way to characterize it would be we learned enough about each other to where they trusted my judgment in discerning things that really had not been worked out. That I knew how to make decisions about what wasn’t known or needed to be defined that was consistent with advancing FBC in a direction that was still consistent with who they were.

**Bill:** Yeah, because they’ve got a DNA that’s been developed, a spiritual momentum, a DNA that’s been put in place, right? And you shared enough of that and discovered that together. It’s like they’re trusting a family member and saying, hey, help lead us here.

**Ken:** The telltale sign was that after they hired me on a regular basis just to come up here, within the first 3 or 4 meetings the lead pastor, who was kind of riding herd on some of the more important decisions, quit coming to all the meetings because he knew I was going to make the same decision that he would have made.

**Bill:** I wonder if you could say it this way. Character, of course. If you’re going to hire on at a church character is important. There’s some level of competence that hopefully you’re looking for to add on your staff, probably that doesn’t exist. Beyond that, as we’ve been talking, I love the idea of natural wiring. I think that’s really good. But even beyond that, there’s a sense of shared heart and shared calling.

**Ken:** I’m trying to think of a way to put words to this thing of when you’re with somebody and there’s such a tender spirit about a broad range of topics that even though
you’re coming at it from different experiences, different bents and so on, you trust each others’ judgments in those areas. You know someone is making the right kind of decision or call or evaluation given all of the variables involved. It’s consistent with the history, the belief systems and the objectives of the organization as to where it needs to go in the future. You have a connection. You trust each others’ judgment. You trust each other’s decision making. It doesn’t mean you always agree with it. I made that connection here after just a few weeks of consulting. Actually made the connection in the very first discussions that developed over the first few weeks, or first few months, of consulting to a degree that after 8 months of weekly consulting then we started exploring my coming on staff.

**Bill:** Then what I call chemistry … this may not be helpful to you, but it’s extremely helpful to me because you’re helping me tease apart what chemistry is. There’s a sense of trust, almost from the get-go. The chemistry … there’s something that you just feel it. And conversations continue to confirm that this chemistry is happening.

**Ken:** I think that’s a great way to describe it, because that’s what I experienced here, and it’s not as if throughout the process of learning each other, learning how to get along, that there weren’t disagreements, there weren’t issues, there was not even emotion involved. It’s just that there was a commitment also, and in the discussion and resolution of those things there was always common ground in what was most important, what made sense and what the future direction was.

**Bill:** When you finally got to the point that they were starting to talk about “have you ever thought of,” you know the come-on-staff conversation which you say occurred after 8 months of close work with them, did they give you a position description? Was it four bullets or 40 pages?

**Ken:** No. I’d say it was just me and the lead pastor talking about what he needed, what the church needed, and early on there was a general understanding of what it was. Much of the general description was worked out through the hiring process conversations on a macro level and never finished until I was on the job 4-5 months.

**Bill:** So do you have a written position description right now?

**Ken:** I do.

**Bill:** And is it four bullets or four pages?

**Ken:** It’s probably 1.5 pages and five or six bullets.

**Bill:** That’s really interesting. I’ve whittled mine down now to four words. Part of what some of the hiring culture is right now, as I know you know, like when this paper gets presented to another bunch of executive pastors, so you’d be sitting out there going, “holy smokes, do I know about hiring! Egad.” Some of the current thinking is, you need this 14-page position description.
Ken: My experience is 14-page descriptions never even get looked at. If you have 14 pages on there - one you can’t even remember it all. Two, the priorities don’t even necessarily emerge out of it.

Bill: Let me say it again and then tell me if you agree or disagree. The position description – the first page might be: “here’s who we envision ourselves to be as a church.” Second through fifth pages might be “here’s our mission, our vision, our core values,” maybe even “here’s a little on the strength of the senior pastor.” Okay, let’s say they’re hiring an executive pastor. Then the next page might be “here’s the general job duties, job description for the executive pastor. Then maybe there’s another page on “we should he should ...” You know, it would be great if he had built 14 buildings and saw 21 people trust Christ under his personal tutelage every year. What do you think of something like that?

Ken: I think that’s your typical recruiting tool that’s developed by a committee. Everything started with a jump ball and there isn’t a filter for anything that doesn’t need to be in there, so it’s just a collection of everything and the kitchen sink. When you are thinking about an executive pastor, the tendency is to throw everything and the kitchen sink in there. If there’s a struggle on an executive pastor, it’s not to know what he’s responsible for, it’s to know what he actually does and works on, and then the other struggle is what does that mean for the lead pastor? Because if anything, even the ones where you have kind of a good momentum for an executive pastor in an organization, I think the next struggle is, okay, but what does that mean for the lead guy? He gets confused. What’s my role? What’s my role with the staff? What’s my role with the executive pastor?

Bill: Okay, the guys you hire, maybe the ladies, too. The people you hire, have you written extensive position descriptions for those?

Ken: We try not to write extensive if we can, because we have a natural tendency toward extensive and complication and we’re pushing back to simplistic and simple.

Bill: But you would say a one-pager.

Ken: One page is the goal. And ½ page is probably what we get to most of the time.

Bill: So you would say, if you were talking with the church at Timbuktoo, and they were saying, we’re considering hiring someone, one of the first things you might talk with them about is, what’s the position description? And it shouldn’t be more than a page. It should be big items, maybe priorities, things like that. Right? Would that position description anywhere talk about some of these values?

Ken: Well, certainly the elements you identified need to be uncovered in the process of hiring by both parties. Depending on what the wiring of the person is, it’s probably how valuable they are in an up-front packet. Now if you use the DISC profile, for example,
and you had someone that was a high C, then they’d read everything you put into a
packet, even if it was 50 pages.

**Bill:** Yeah, they’d want the 14 pages.

**Ken:** If you’ve got a high I in there and he’s a low C, he’s going to skim it and try and
find out what’s most important in there, but he’s looking for the relational aspects and
how it relates to him, what he’d be doing.

**Bill:** I think he wants to know if you smile at him. Do you like me?

**Ken:** Or do I like you? That’s right. I’m not sure I like you. I do believe that some
kind of history, something that describes calling, something that describes whatever
you’ve got is very helpful, even if it’s just something that drives people back to your
website if it’s all on that. But as far as what you’re hiring, why you’re hiring, what
they’ll be doing, I think as much as you can in getting it down to plain language. I like
thinking about activities and relationships in your position description sheet. So besides
your broad statement of “this is what this position is for,” then I think something that
gives it real show leather, whether it’s primarily “these are the kind of activities you do
and these are the teams or people that you relate to.” I manage these people, I lead these
teams, I am a team member of this activity. If you identify what you’re supposed to do
Monday through Friday of what’s known, and it may not all be known – it could be
general broad statements, but as much as possible here’s activities and here’s the
relationships I work with to get these things done, it’ll tell them a lot
about what that role
looks like versus broad statements of who to participate and getting executive leadership
efforts to develop the worship ministries within a framework. All that sounds really,
really good, but I’m sure it really tells me I’m associate pastor.

**Bill:** You’d say lead the worship team each week in Christ-honoring services or
something like that. Participate as a team member here, lead this team there.

**Ken:** Participate as a team member that meets once or twice a week to plan services, to
evaluate past weeks’ services, to develop creative components that support themes of that
week’s . . . I mean, once you get down to talking about representative activities and
relationships, I think you can really understand the job.

**Bill:** Do you have one of those we could just take a name off of and I could have as an
example?

**Ken:** Uh-huh. You could have mine.

**Bill:** So you could just send me an email, I’ll take your name off and say, as a for
example, here’s what one of those might look like. I think that’s a great idea. I love that
the activities and relationships, framing it in those terms, makes a ton of sense to me.
Ken: It just makes it real practical and takes buzz words and phrases out of it, you know. It’s not that those aren’t good, because sometimes I think they have their place and they are good. It’s just that they can be confusing. They don’t necessarily bring clarity.

Bill: Yeah. And like you said, in that initial stage you’re trying to discover each other, keep it in plain language, keep it simple. You know, what is it you’re asking me to do? Do this, do that, lead this, lead that, be a team member here. I think that makes great sense. I’d love to get a copy of your position description if that would be okay with you and the church. I’d love to have that and include it in the paper.

Ken: When I did mine this year all I did was look at my activities and look at the org chart and I tried to make sure there was something in there that represented everything that reports to me.

Bill: Yeah, but wouldn’t, and I’m sure an entrepreneurial spirit is part of your key staff’s DNA, but right now that wouldn’t be included on that position description.

Ken: Probably not. That’s a descriptor maybe of what I’m like, or what they wanted in me or what he needs. It might be part of the recruiting language paragraph that talked about what you’re looking for, but I don’t necessarily think…you bring up another thing, too. I think it’s important not to confuse recruiting language with position descriptions. Position descriptions needs to be about “now that I have the job it’s clear to me what I do and what I’m supposed to do this year and how I’m going to be evaluated if I was successful or not.” Recruiting language is the shopping for that job and shopping for that person.

Bill: So it’s trolling, throwing out the net.

Ken: Yeah, it’s trolling, and I have seen lots of different position sheets that were written like they were recruiting documents which is fine when you’re recruiting, but now that it’s a job it doesn’t need to be like it’s a recruiting document. It needs to be like it’s a job. That’s why I like the idea…you develop a position description that says here’s the roles, responsibilities for this person. Now attach recruiting language documents to it, but don’t try to do it all in one document. Maybe it is one document. It’s just that your position description or job description is just one of the components of the package.

Bill: I guess I also hear you saying you don’t put the DNA part on there because somebody might believe they have that and then they’re trying to sell you on it rather than having it come out as a more organic part of the discussion. In other words, being an entrepreneurial spirit is important to the church in those staff positions and you put on there you better be an entrepreneur. A guy who thinks he is will begin selling himself as that rather than have that be part of the discovery process.

Ken: Correct.
Bill: Let me ask some mechanics questions. Because I want to honor your time I might want to call you again. Gosh, I can’t tell you how good this is going to be. Do you guys use …. If you took resumes, how do you do that?

Ken: That’s a great question. We have an HR department. We actually have a couple people who work in HR, and they typically will be the collectors of it.

Bill: So you might formulate this one-page position description, give it to the HR department, and they start doing their deal.

Ken: They start doing some recruiting and all that stuff and whoever needs the position will also do some recruiting.

Bill: Do you have a formal church application besides the resume?

Ken: That’s a great question. I don’t think we do. We ought to.

Bill: If you were going to hire a new Children’s Minister …

Ken: I don’t think we do, Bill. I could be wrong, but I think that we need that. I like having a standard application that goes along with stuff. I can’t remember. I did fill out something.

Bill: I have to believe you did. I know we do background checks and stuff.

Ken: Yeah, we do that. I had to provide references.

Bill: Yeah, for background checks you have to provide residence for the past seven years or thirteen years. You have to provide a whole bunch of stuff that usually doesn’t come on a resume. I know we use a standardized application. It doesn’t matter what the staff position is. I’m just curious to find out if you guys have one that you use or you’d say gosh, no, we’ve never had need for that.

Ken: Um hmm.

Bill: How about references? If you were going to have a position for someone who reports to you, do you check the references or does HR do that?

Ken: Yes, we do both and it depends on the position and what’s going on. If we’re in a hurry we may even hand out the references to several people and have a lot of different folks check the references just so we can get through and so a lot of times somebody that gives us ten references, we check them all. We don’t just check the first three.

Bill: Sure. I know you said you ran everybody through the Your Unique Design, but you also said DISC. Do you do both?
Ken: We do DISC. We do Your Unique Design and then lately I’ve got us started to do Strength Finders. I’m looking at another test right now, of adding maybe a couple of them that are more traditional HR tests. But one tests resiliency. The thinking behind that is when you’re working in public sector work resiliency and thick skin are like two of the most important characteristics that you can have. You could be very brilliant, lots of experience, very competent, really embody the DNA, but if you’re not very resilient working in the public sector, you may not last very long. So that’s another thing I’d like to get on your radar that I don’t think churches think about.

Bill: Man, oh man, I’m writing it down. Not only am I recording that, I’m writing that one down.

Ken: I just can’t tell you how often I’ve seen someone who’s really a sharp, bright person but they’ve always got these emotional things going on.

Bill: You know, it’s one thing that we’ve learned, like going through that neighborhood thing, it’s just general day-to-day stuff. Nobody walks in with the thickest skin they could grow, but if you can’t one “growed,” you’re in trouble. There’s just no way you could be long-term. It isn’t going to happen. Do the people you hire (and I’m just pretending you’re hiring a new Children’s Minister) … who else is part of that interviewing process besides you?

Ken: It’ll depend a lot on the position that we’re hiring, but typically the HR person will do some cursory interviews and then after that whoever would be the direct report would probably be the next person who does the interviews. It’s never one interview. It’s always multiple. Typically anybody they may relate to or at least a good representation of who they may work with, we would probably set up a series of interviews with those folks.

Bill: Do they have veto power? In other words, who makes the hire?

Ken: I think that if they felt real strongly about it then we would listen to it heavily. I don’t know that we necessarily give anyone carte blanche veto power, but usually if anybody has a big red flag we’re going to pay attention to it. Sometimes red flags are about they’re worried about their own territory or they’re worried about something else. So I don’t think there’s a standard answer to veto power.

Bill: But if somebody, of it the whole team said whoa, whoa, whoa, a wise supervisor would say okay.

Ken: You pretty much have to do good all across the board to make it through. Sometimes we’ve been called like the gauntlet. We do a lot of interviews, and we have a series of questions. Like at the top level I had to answer a series of about 20 something questions and then be grilled by all the governing elders at the same time.

Bill: Theological questions or what kind of questions?
Ken: Some of them would have different categories or purposes behind the questions so some of it might be what would you do if you could do anything to change stuff at Fellowship?

Bill: So short essay questions.

Ken: Yeah, they were all essay questions and there were lots of different bents to the questions, different purposes for them. Describe things you admire and why.

Bill: Are those propriety, or could I get a copy of those too?

Ken: No, those aren’t proprietary. It I can find them. Before we get out of here, before we’re through, the lady whose is taking over our HR is Linda Stanbury. I’ll just tell Linda we had talked and you wanted a copy of some standard stuff we send people including questions for top-level people.

Bill: I’d love to call her for that. How do you go about debriefing then? Do you assemble everybody together all at one time? You just interviewed Bill for …

Ken: If it’s a top-level person, then usually one of the top-level teams has got a normal meeting schedule and that may be an agenda item on their schedule. So if it was an elder team, if it was our executive leadership team which is what we’re calling our staff executives, then that might be an agenda item where we brought somebody in to be grilled. We’ve looked at their stuff, we’ve heard somebody’s recommendation who would be their overseer and then they’re an agenda item for us to make a determination on or to determine next steps on.

Bill: Do you ever interview upper-level people in different situations like how are they at a dinner?

Ken: Absolutely. We’ll do things like do a reception for them with a control group of folks, just for people to get to know them, meet them, see how they react to them.

Bill: Yeah, not just in the church office.

Ken: Not necessarily everybody’s voting on whether we hire this person or not.

Bill: Right, but just how they handle themselves in public and around people and at a restaurant and stuff like that.

Ken: Yes, and I’d say the more key public the position is, the more we do that.

Bill: Then if it’s your, I’m presuming it’s a majority of the church reports to you. Do you make that final call?
Ken: In a way yes, I do. I don’t use it that way. I’ll only be the trump card if I’ve got a big red flag.

Bill: Forgive me. I guess what I meant was does the Elder Board …

Ken: I’m one of the final signatures on the approval to hire.

Bill: Okay, so you actually have a document, a checklist? You just said you’re the final …

Ken: Yeah, I’m looking at two requests for hiring. I record requests. Department: Singles/Community Group Administrative Assistant. Support new Singles Pastor and new Community Group Pastor. Submitted by these two people, report to these two people, requested by this person. They signed it. Their overseer, then all the way up to me. Then I just signed it.

Bill: So you have kind of a single piece of paper on the chain of command that it gets approved by.

Ken: Um hmm. This is even just to begin the recruiting process.

Bill: Ah.

Ken: We don’t start recruiting until it’s been approved.

Bill: I see. Wow. Whew! That’s good. Okay. Do you, or do you think … you’re standing up in front of a group of 100, let’s say they’re all executive pastors. They won’t be, but let’s say they were. People who could hire. What do you want to tell them? If you said you know, like good to great, like built to last, Fellowship has learned some things about hiring. Pretend you’ve already presented the philosophy. Here’s the process. Step A. Step B. Step C. What is it that you want to tell these guys about hiring that you don’t think you’ve communicated yet? Like rules of thumb or guides. Let me tell you, you’re looking for this or you’re feeling for this. What are those sort of intangible things that you’d want them to leave with? They’re driving home to Wichita Falls and they’re going gosh, I got this packet of great stuff but the thing he said that was the most powerful was …

Ken: I think one would be you can’t change the way people are wired. Natural wiring is huge, and lots of people can present well; they can tailor themselves to a particular job requirement and when you’ve needed to fill that slot for some time you’re just beyond wanting to see if they could fog a mirror sometimes before you’re ready, so if you’ve got somebody who even looks like it, you’re ready to run a gun. But you can’t change who they really are. And you don’t know in the presentation. You have to mine for that. You have to mine for that with different objective tools and tests, with different interviews and using different settings and different people to do it.
Bill: It’s almost like a core value is an aspirational core value and then there’s an actual core value.

Ken: Right.

Bill: There’s an aspirational presentation by the candidate.

Ken: I don’t want any more checks to bounce. I want to pay my bills is a very, very good motivator for me to put on a good front for this position.

Bill: Yeah, so there’s an aspirational fit and then there’s an actual fit.

Ken: And you have to mine for what people’s natural wirings really are and how that might work with your organization and it takes a lot of work. Whatever your process is, develop one and don’t circumvent it. Don’t skip over it. Don’t pretend that just because you had an electric meeting with somebody and it’s over, you’re going to be tempted to say I’m really, really busy. I have all these other things to do and I’ve needed somebody for 8 months here, and let’s just get them in place. Don’t do that.

Bill: So don’t hire on impulse.

Ken: Don’t hire on impulse. It’s like the story I heard yesterday about one of my sons’ friends aunt who met a guy and she just knew he was the one and so they got married after two weeks. And then she found out some time later that when he becomes very stressed out he becomes Karen.

Bill: He becomes what?

Ken: He becomes Karen … a girl. He puts on Karen’s clothes. He wants to be addressed as Karen. And it’s just the way he deals with his stress.

Bill: Oh, my gosh.

Ken: Well, she really thought she knew him and was ready to get married after 2 weeks, but she did not know him. To get to know him, it would have taken more time than that and it would have been better had she seen him stressed out before then.

Bill: So there are things about the candidate you have to mine.

Ken: You have to mine to find out what natural wirings really are.

Bill: But you also might say there are some blind spots that I might have that I’m not aware of.

Ken: The other things pulling on you. The other people pulling on you. All the stuff that’s stacking up on your desk or the ones that are sitting in line waiting to get to you
next. And so your thing to say typically is, I’ve got to put some things off the list. When it comes to hiring, and you can use some relative scale. If it’s an administrative assistant you don’t have to use the same due diligence you would if it was say, an associate pastor of some kind. But still there is an appropriate level of due diligence that you need to do and you’re not going to discover natural wiring until you go through some process of due diligence. Natural wiring can’t be changed, so regardless of how well they presented, they’re going to be who they are. And your job ahead of time is to discover who that is, so the more you can do up front to prevent a hiring mistake will save yourselves a lot of headache. It’s a lot easier not to hire somebody than it is to replace someone who was a mistake. The second thing is that when you do hire them you need to put in some really early markers for a probationary period.

**Bill:** Do you have a probationary period.

**Ken:** You don’t have to call it a probationary period, but you just need something that says we just want to make sure this is a good fit, so you’re going to have a review after 60 days, after 90 days, after 120 days, whatever that looks like, but you’re going to have some early reviews to keep close account, to see how this is working, because if it’s not working, even though it’s not pleasant, it’s going to be easier to make the change early in the process than once they’ve been embedded in the public organization.

**Bill:** Have you ever had to do that?

**Ken:** Yeah, I have. Thus far here we haven’t had to do it since I’ve been here yet, but I’ve only been here a year. But it’s something I really believe in and I intend for us to do. We’ve had to do it here before, too, but we’re like everybody else. Our tendency is to give everybody every benefit of the doubt, and I don’t think that’s the right way to do it. I think early on you have early indicators of success that need that same consistency we were talking about where trust is developed early and then it’s multiplied and continues to grow over time, but if early in this process it’s not moving forward, it’s moving backward, you have to pay attention to that. The reason for it is, you’re in a public organization, and that’s different than being in a private organization. In a public organization there are tentacles to every relationship you have for the rest of your constituency groups, the rest of your stakeholders. It’s not like just because they’re a secretary or assistant that 8 or 9 times out of 10 they heard about the job from somebody in the church so they’re already connected to these series of relationships. When you make a change, it’s never as much as just making a change. You’re going to have made somebody’s father, somebody’s mother, somebody’s sister, somebody’s best friend, somebody’s boyfriend, somebody’s girlfriend, somebody’s uncle, somebody’s whatever else mad at you. And they’re all going to want to talk about it and you know what? They may wind up leaving the church because of what you had to do. So that’s why it’s vitally important not to do anything that doesn’t really work out, that you haven’t really checked out and secondly it’s also why if it’s not working early keep short accounts and let that be known so it’s not a surprise for anybody.

**Bill:** How about search firms?
Ken: That would be kind of the third element of changes, is make sure they’re not a surprise to anyone. Have a commitment to process with people. If it’s not working out, let people know ahead of making a decision to change.

Bill: Tell me that again in different words.

Ken: One of the promises I made around here because when I got here everyone on staff was skittish. There was kind of a negative atmosphere, environment that was a result of being in transition for about 5 years and also having some key people let go in the last six months. People were wondering, “am I next?” Whenever you fire someone in any organization, especially in this public setting, it sets off tremors and ripples of fear and doubts about how secure they are and whether or not they might be next which, because its public, those ripples go beyond co-workers. They go out into your body as well. So what we’ve promised our staff is that no one is suddenly going to be fired. We’re not going to come up and tap you on the shoulder and say, okay, that’s it. You’re out. If things aren’t working out, our commitment to you is to process with you so that you know it. So that you have opportunities to make changes; so we have opportunities to move you to maybe find a better fit, but to try to take the fear out of the equation and say we are not going to surprise you that all of a sudden tomorrow you are gone and you thought everything was okay.

Bill: You’re sitting out there talking, you’ve just finished up and this busy senior pastor raises his hand and he says, are you telling me … I’ve heard you describe these things, the amount of time this is going to take sounds horrendous. I’m busy. Sunday comes twice week. I’ve got to preach. What about outsourcing this?

Ken: I’d say it’s like this. When you get the wrong person in there who’s not competent and they’ve got relationships tied to key members on your Elder Board and other places, and they’re making people made and causing disruptions that make you spend an extra 20 hours a week just dismantling and doing damage control, was that easier or harder than taking that extra 20 hours up front to do your due diligence?

Bill: Yeah, the senior pastor. Part of that is there are so many attitudes going with that comment that I’ve heard which is why I repeat it …

Ken: Is outsourcing a good idea? It could be if you’re talking about a secretarial position, you’re looking at a temp service to do something. But if you’re talking about an associate pastor, then you’re going to live with them. Those other people, whatever they got from you, they go away. They don’t live with that decision. It doesn’t mean that hiring a search firm isn’t a good way to narrow your candidates and get you way ahead, but it’s not your due diligence. You can’t give away your due diligence. Most of these people, when you’re in the trenches with them in ministry, it’s a lot like having a marriage relationship. You’re dependent on each other; you’re covering each other’s back. It’s a public setting and advocating that responsibility and that opportunity to make sure you have the best team member is something you’ll have to live with for a
long time. I’d just say this. In so many settings where you have congregational forms of
government and you have lay people who maybe have more involvement than what
benefits you and the organization, when you have the ability to influence key decisions
on hiring, never hand that off. That’s a gift.

**Bill:** That’s what I think. Part of what I hope to accomplish with this paper is you know,
you say, “I want to write a paper on hiring.” Aw, gee. Why not write a paper on getting
poked in the eye with a sharp stick. But I think not only the corporations, but the
churches that have a great track record have learned how important hiring is. It’s not just
hire a warm body and train them. It doesn’t work that way. You might have gotten lucky
once or twice, but to go for 20 or 25 years and hopefully moving in a better and better
direction, you’ve learned a thing or two about hiring. And churches that might be just
starting out I think need to hear some of this stuff and process it. Whether there’s only
one pastor on staff or there are two of you and you’re looking to hire a third, this part of
the process that you can’t shortchange.

**Ken:** The other thing I’d say is, as you’re talking I’m thinking about it. I haven’t
developed it. I’m almost opening a can of worms I don’t know how to
deal with, but I’m
going to do it anyway. That is not everybody’s wiring is such that they’re really good at
hiring other people.

**Bill:** Open more.

**Ken:** I’m thinking about that. That you do have some people who are maybe more
thorough, more intuitive to mine in areas that come up in the process, more investigative
in the way that they go about the process.

**Bill:** In your experience, are the high I’s those people?

**Ken:** I’d say this, not just that. I’d say that it’s probably a combination, you know. Not
necessarily one or the other. I haven’t thought about this enough. I just know that even
in our setting thinking about people that there are key leaders here who make more hiring
mistakes than others. That’s something I need to chew on a little bit. Maybe we ought to
both give that some thought and develop it a little bit, because I don’t have any data to
develop an opinion on. The person I’m thinking about, he and I both are fairly high DI
ID’s. He does a good initial job. He’s good intuitively but just not thorough. And yet
just looking at our DISC profile wiring they’re not going to be that much different. I
haven’t seen his Service by Design or his Strength Finders. Anyway, that’s kind of a
rabbit trail. When you look out there and you go, wait a minute … which is another
reason that supports involving a team in the hiring process. You’re going to be more apt
to not make mistakes if you have multiple people involved in it.

**Bill:** Yeah, presuming or your might even, I’ll say it and then you can say “I disagree
with that or I agree with it.” If you were in a church that had been in a certain place or
going a certain direction and felt like it was time to make a change, and they bring you on
staff. You’re there a couple of years, you put some trust in your trust bank. As you begin
hiring, aren’t you going to control, to control the hiring DNA, aren’t you going to control the people who interview? Right? Because you know that if Joe Curmudgeon … you don’t want Joe Curmudgeon hiring anyone, because you get more of what you had. The people who seem to embody the DNA would seem to be the people you would want involved in the hiring process.

**Ken:** I think that’s great insight. In fact, I sent you my position sheet. It’s got what we call our staff and lay leader values, which is what we’re using for values right now. We decided that our staff and lay leaders shape the environment of the culture, and so we wanted to be intentional about shaping the environment of the staff and lay leaders. And so we came up with, this is the things we’re going to work on. Again, we didn’t include everything and the kitchen sink in there. We assumed certain things. We assumed spiritual integrity and excellence and just aimed at things we thought were appropriate to be able to focus on. One of them is positive because what we realize is that if you’re not careful, curmudgeons do multiply. If you have too much of that in staff it’s going to really seed a negative bent to your church environment. So we’re kind of aiming on purpose to say we want positive people here.

**Bill:** I think that’s a great point. That’s one of the things as I wondered out loud about the position descriptions and how strongly I feel about chemistry, and you put tons of great words to that, there are certain things that if you don’t have them, I don’t want you here. Number one, I don’t think you’ll fit. But number two, I think it’s just not good.

**Ken:** I agree with you 100%. Your current chemistry may not be all that healthy and you are looking to tweak that. You’re not saying I don’t want to be so negative and anal the way we are. I want it to be a little more relaxed and positive and grace-filled. I think that’s fine to build that into your language, your values and your intentionally recruiting for that because that’s what the organizations needs, which also means that some of the people that interview don’t necessarily embody the same levels of that which you want for the whole organization for the future.

**Bill:** Right, and some of those can be coached and some of those are going to be kind of like Survivor…outwit, outplay, outlast. And some of the curmudgeons whose natural wiring is going to incline them in that direction and we just wait for God, depending on their age, you know we may just have to wait them out. I know you guys might not wait them out, but we would kind of have to wait them out.

**Ken:** We all do. In a public setting those people have relationships that have tentacled all over the place. Sometimes you do have to kind of wait it out.

**Bill:** This has been so good for me. I could talk to you for another hour, but I want to free you up to go do your life. I may want to call you tomorrow or Saturday if you could talk for 20 minutes. If not say can’t talk now, don’t call me. You made me think of a few more things that I’d like to keep talking about, but we can do that catch-as-catch-can.
Ken: That sounds fine. Also, while we’re talking I was just looking for examples of resiliency testing. I found a website called psychtests.com. On it, if you go under Take a Test, it’ll list the top ten tests, then it lists new tests and they have a couple of them down here. One says Mental Toughness Test. The second is Sensitivity to Criticism Test. Anyway, I think coming up with a profile. This is something that interests me, too, Bill. It’s on my radar screen to develop what should our full testing be and I’ve already decided I want to add some things to it. Right now it’s Service by Design, DISC and adding Strength Finders. Then I also want to add something about testing resiliency and I don’t know what else, but I’m thinking about using some basic things on IQ, communication skills and things like that.

Bill: How do you test for character? Or do you just do that through interviews and references?

Ken: You know, I don’t know. Right now, outside of interviews, life stories and references I don’t really know how else to do it.

Bill: Because I know we got burned a few years ago on someone who turned out to have a real problem with alcohol. We thought we had looked under every rock and it turns out we had not. So we painted this wish in there, but I haven’t found anything that you say, take this quiz or answer these four questions.

Ken: I’m not sure you can cover everything like that. It’s the same way with Internet pornography, anger management, anger issues. Just look under the categories that emerge in Celebrate Recovery and I think what you have to assume is all those dysfunctions exist on your team if it’s of any size at all at different points in time. All you can do is screen for the extreme manifestations of it. The other part of it needs to be some way of managing the spiritual healthy along the way. Putting someone into recovery and letting them continue to be an employee.

Bill: I mean, there’s a whole other chapter to this book. What do you do for orientation, and what do the first 90 days, the first year look like, which is way beyond what I have to write on. But that’s good stuff.

Ken: Well, I like that, too. I was real intentional my first 100 days here. I had a plan, and I thought about writing a book on a pastor’s first 100 days.

Bill: Wow. That would be real helpful. The problem is, they wouldn’t read it.

Ken: The problem is right now my conclusions are it’s probably not anything more than an article anyway. To make it a book you’re really having to pad it. I don’t think there’s a book’s worth of material there.

Bill: Okay, so you’ve sent me some stuff, I can call Linda Stanbury and I can just mention that we’ve talked and she would send me the application packet or what would I ask for?
Ken: Just say send any of the standard stuff you send out for people who you are recruiting and include the stuff if it was a top-level person like I understand you have a list of 20-something questions you ask and things like that.

Bill: If I ever get this thing all written up in the next year … I’ve got to talk with Willowcreek, too. I’d love for you to get on that too, and maybe there’s something for us all to learn as we talk to other people.

Ken: That’d be great. I’m sure there is.

Part Two

Bill: How big an HR department do you have?

Ken: We have two people. One of them’s full-time; one of them’s not.

Bill: One part time, one full-time. Are you looking at the questions?

Ken: I’m looking at the questions now.

Bill: So, #2. Your weeding out process. One of the questions that came up was you undoubtedly have way more applicants than you have positions, and so briefly what is your wedding-out process? Does HR screen from 10 to 2 and then you take over at the 2 level, or what does that look like?

Ken: As we talked before, we are generally going to have a description above the responsibilities, the experience, school, kind of model of the person we’re looking for and then HR will do some screening on that. There’s not a set model. We don’t tell them “screen out everybody who doesn’t look like this.” But it is kind of screen through that and give us the ones that look like potential candidates to you based on this, and I’d say that their screening still leaves a broad brush. They haven’t screened it to a tight number. It’s just been a broad number, and then the next screening will probably take place by the overseers of the areas that are being hired for us. So we don’t necessarily say, “oh, here’s the manager that’s hiring, here’s all your applicants, you go figure it out on your own. But we used to do that, and we still do it some but what we find is it’s all over the map as to what somebody’s going to do if they look at somebody and think “wow, those people look more talented than me,” then they’re going to screen out some really quality people, so we don’t want that. So we try to create something that says we’re going to have somebody in mid- to top-level management in at least reviewing the candidates that are potential just to create accountability to make sure we’re looking at all the best candidates.

Bill: So kind of like a one over 1one.
Ken: Yeah. One over one. It depends on how critical it is to us. Putting it in your context, if we were looking for your LS2 guy, as important as it was and you kind of wrestled with it as long as you had, then it would get elevated. And so it’s not just whoever’s over those looking. I’m probably looking at it, too. Tell me who all’s out there. At least give me a report. Who all have you got; who all are you looking at; who all have you turned down. Why did you turn them down, what did they look like?

Bill: Okay, I’ve got you. Certainly you get more applications … for every position that you advertise, key positions, there are clearly people who aren’t right at all. Do they get a letter from HR right up front?

Ken: Yeah, they typically do. It just depends on how we got their stuff. If it was the answer to our solicitation then we would. We would send a “thanks, but no thanks” letter from HR.

Bill: On average, how many telephone calls does it take, or how many hours are involved in HR and how many on, say, your part to hire a pastor?

Ken: Again, it would be determined by the particular position. If it’s someone in top management, it’s going to take a lot more than it would for someone coming in at front-line pastoral position, but even our front-line pastoral position, probably what’s involved is HR or someone in the organization has found them, they’ve spent some time looking at their material and setting up a cursory interview, talking with them and then feeding that information back to our central offices, and then someone else is probably talking to them on the phone, corresponding with them by email, probably both of those; set up initial interview time. If that goes well, then we give them a packet and have them tested with Your Unique Design, DISC profile and Strength Finders and Bob Beall’s team test that says in the team where do you fit? Are you a middle captain, are you a captain, are you a follower and all that stuff. We may do one other. I can’t remember. But we get the testing done, that comes back in, we look over that. Different people look over it; then we might bring them in for another series of interviews. If it’s a top-level position even after that those are just the first ones. Then we bring them back in for another set of interviews with more people and more things. Then after that then we might go ahead and have final discussions for packaging an offer. So that would probably be the more complex process, and depending on what’s going on with it you might even add a couple more test points in that.

Bill: If you were just going to off-the-cuff … 80 hours?

Ken: In what I just described?

Bill: Yeah, for your time, or would it be 80 for the total?

Ken: I’m thinking total employee organizational time to hire somebody at a top level, all discussions …
Bill: You think 80?

Ken: You know, I’d say 50-80. That’s a top level. If it’s not a top level it might be as little as 15-20.

Bill: 15-20 for a mid- or for a lower?

Ken: Lower.

Bill: Okay. How long do you keep the applicant interview process private?

Ken: Let’s define private. By private, do you mean we keep it out of the public sector?

Bill: By private, what the class was interested in. You’re going to hire me. I’m, let’s say, at Christ Chapel. At what point do we get in the interview process when you say to me, “you know, we’re serious enough you have to tell somebody because we’re going to say something here.” Not in the congregation, but you know that kind of stuff starts leaking out. At what point in the process do you say, “we’re pretty serious about this?”

Ken: Well, that’s the point. I think you answered your own question. We would say that when we’ve determined we’re serious about that person. It could be after a cursory interview, but probably it’s after they’ve filled out their testing stuff and come in for the second one, and by that time we’re going to make a decision: do we want to keep investing resources into this person or not? And if we are, the only reason we are if we think that’s a serious candidate. If at that point in time we had three serious candidates, we might pull the punch for a little while, because we don’t want to set something in motion for them until we’ve got some litmus test that says we’re 70% there or 75% there or something like that.

Bill: If you have this conversation with me and you say, it’s probably fine if you say something there because we’re going to say something here, how big a risk am I taking?

Ken: Well, that will depend on where you work and what your people are like. I think you have to consider that at a lot of churches, when you let them know “I’m looking,” sometimes they say goodbye to you. That’s the outside potential crazy part of the risk. If it’s something where you have a close relationship like a guy a talked to today. His people don’t know he’s looking, but he’s told his senior pastor “I’m beginning to feel a stirring that says I’m supposed to move on from children’s ministry. I don’t know what that looks like. I know I need to evaluate that and just kind of start to pray about that and keep my feelers out.” So he’s done a general purpose thing a couple months ago, but he’s not done any specific thing or specific follow-up. We met and had a cursory talk. We like him. We’re going to invite him back. We’re going to have him tested and stuff, but he’s probably not going to say anything until we’re specifically talking about a particular job and we’re 70% there. In his situation, I think they’re not going to be in a hurry to get rid of him. They’re going to want to process well because he’s winning there publicly. Bu if you have however you want to describe an anal retentive, controlling
senior pastor—kind of deal who is always worried about public image, he’s hung up on what’s loyal, disloyal, and he’s quick to discard anyone he thinks is disloyal, you need to be prepared that when I do tell him, he may fire me on the spot. And so that’s a case where if I were in that situation I would not tell him until I was 100% sure. I’d much rather deal with the smaller risk that someone processing internally at a little bit broader level leaked back to him and then I dealt with it than I’ve waded into the thing. So it depends on your boss. It depends on the setting. It depends on the church that you’re in. The appropriate thing, if it’s a godly situation that’s managed in a godly way, and I’d like to think we fall into that category, that when we’re processing with people if we’re beginning to think there’s not a fit long-term, we’re just going to layer the conversation without it being conclusive and we’re saying, we just want to process with you. But we’re not sure we’re utilizing your best gifts and your calling to the maximum that they can be, and we have a stewardship issue with that as well.

Bill: You try to be honest and up-front.

Ken: Right. We have one of those going on right now. We have a worship guy we’re looking at moving to our new campus. We have 3 on-site worship venues. We’ve begun to define the distinctive of what each of those venues are. This guy is really talented. He doesn’t seem to fit any of those venues. We began talking with him about that and we both agreed this isn’t a good long-term fit, but we want you to stay employed until the first of the year, and after that we’re going to offer you a 3-month severance. And in the meantime we’re going to give you the latitude to look and process. We know you have limited responsibilities on Sunday morning, but you have a lot of freedom, and we’re starting to process openly with people about that together in partnership. But it took a lot of conversation to where we agreed what this is and we were just patient with him, and we gave it that opportunity before we had any kind of heavy-handed or heated approach to the thing.

Bill: Did you have to bring a certain number of folks to the final dance? I mean, this is your call. Do you tell your guys to do that?

Ken: No. Well, sometimes we do, sometimes we don’t. We don’t get into saying, well, there’s always going to be three, then there’s going to be five and we’re always going to pick the right guy or whatever else. We always expect that if we’re praying for this God’s going to bring us the person He wants us to have and so when we’re processing we’re always praying, “Lord, is this the appointment You have for us?” And it’s been times when it was one person. There were no other people. They came out of left field. We don’t know how we got them, and we know they’re a gift from God and there are other times when we’re running a lot through and we’re looking at candidates and it’s just more confusing than that and we’re narrowing it down and stuff like that.

Bill: But there’s no Search Committee rule that says you have to bring three candidates.

Ken: No, and I don’t think we’d be headed back that direction. If anything, Bill, I’d just tell you … this is anecdotal, it’s not statistical … but my gut tells me that the times when
we’ve had the process more where “get the top three, hire the top one” have been less successful than the time when we’ve been praying through it and it was just clear that the Lord had brought us someone. It was clear.

**Bill:** For pastoral hires, do you hire exclusively from within or without or is it a mix, or how do you differentiate that?

**Ken:** It’s a mix, and I’d say that we’ve done both. We’ve had seasons where we’ve hired pretty much all from within. We’ve had different times when we’ve hired people from without. There’s nothing to say that right we’re necessarily going one way or another with it. We just hired a position from within for our recovery ministries. We’re looking for some other kind of congregational pastors and we’re definitely trying to hire outside the body for those right now. So it just depends where we’re at, what’s going on and what the strategic needs are for those areas, too.

**Bill:** So you don’t look at it and say we’re going to hire from within unless you just can’t find it.

**Ken:** No. I’ve worked with a lot of churches that were very successful with that, and it has been a growing trend for a number of years, and it does work well and sometimes it doesn’t work well. Sometimes what happens is I think that you do it because there is an advantage of them having your DNA already, but the other disadvantage is that you can get inbred really fast, too.

**Bill:** It’s good to share the DNA, but …

**Ken:** We’re looking for a broader gene pool sometimes.

**Bill:** Yeah, there are seasons in a church when you need to broaden the gene pool.

**Ken:** If anything, I think that churches naturally err on too narrow a side of a gene pool. We’re wrestling with nepotism policies here. And even though 80% of the businesses in America are family-owned, it doesn’t mean that’s the easiest way to keep dysfunction from taking place. We’re get tired of not being able to manage an employee without managing their husband, their child, their mother, their father, their whatever. Or having to let somebody go, but then you’re still going to have their mother, their brother, their sister on staff with you. Not to mention that you have an elder or board member’s daughter, mother, brother who wants to be on staff and then you’ve got the weirdness of that. Or then you’ve got the senior pastor’s daughter, brother, son, wife, and when can you manage and when can you don’t manage? Do you let them report directly to that person or not because if they do, that’s probably kind of an ethical issue. If they don’t … or it’s a potential conflict of interest. If they don’t, you end up having to deal with it anyway.

**Bill:** It’s just practical after a while.
**Ken:** It’s not about people being good, bad, indifferent. It’s about the bigger you get, the more you allow these complicating issues to exist and the more difficult situations to exist and the more difficult and complicated the organization gets. If anything, good organization, the bigger you get, has to get simpler.

**Bill:** Simpler with a broader DNA?

**Ken:** I’m a mixed DNA fan. It depends what’s going on. I like having raise people up in the body that do come on and fulfill a ministerial role that’s grown into in that environment, and I also like bringing in the fresh new energy and gifts from outside that gets you thinking and doing things that weren’t on your radar screen.

**Bill:** So it would be fair if I put a bumper sticker on you that says as you get bigger, you would believe you get simpler organizationally and broader in your gene pool, broader DNA.

**Ken:** Yeah.

**Bill:** I’m not trying to pigeonhole you, I’m just trying to say …

**Ken:** No, I think that’s right. Because if you look at the natural kind of course of events, small church, small ________, getting started, solo practitioners, burned out, not enough time. I’m just findings anybody. Can they fog a mirror? Can they do that? You look up and you’ve got all your family doing jobs. You’ve got all of your friends doing jobs. You’ve got their wives doing jobs. You’ve got your elders volunteering. As it develops, some of those people actually come on staff and get paid for it, but then what you need to multiply yourself is somebody who probably already has more experience in that initially, at least most of the time, 7 times out of 10 or something, and so you start bringing a few people from the outside. The bigger you get, the more that kind of wading into that broad mix is good but also as you’ve added initially you’ve added this responsibility, that responsibility, that responsibility, then that flat-line organization can only go on for so long before you need some kind of level of dividing up the managerial responsibilities. Then it gets to the point in the development of the organization where you can’t use this flat structure. Having a missions pastor, a men’s ministry, a women’s ministry and however else you want to do, whether you do stages of life, whether you some other kind of geographic division of congregation, __________, but doing it on a flat line doesn’t work either. There’s too many of them. So somehow or other of being able to then start delivering your ministry services through, I’ll call them business units. For lack of a better term. If you think in terms of what happened in business trends back in the 80’s and 90’s when MRP, Justin Time Mfg. and all this other stuff started merging, one of the other things that started happening was reorganizing companies by profit centers instead of by skill sets or by job responsibilities. An example would be if you’re manufacturing and you’ve got this section of the widgits that you’re doing, there was a time when all of engineering was done in the engineering department. They handed off to all the planning All the planning guys then made the plan for those materials and
farmed those out on lead time away and handed off to procurement. Procurement purchased the materials, handed those off to finance who monitored and to some kind of acquisition group that got the things in the door and stuff like that. But it was always big department, _______ talks to big department, lots of finger pointing and all that stuff. Well, that shifted to why don’t we take the engineer responsible it, the planner responsible for it, and the buyer responsible for it and the finance responsible for it and say, hey, you’re a team. You go do it; you go deliver it. That’s where we’re headed right now with the simpler. When we look at a congregation of 7000 or whatever it is that we have coming on a regular basis that we don’t think we can handle it anymore as separate services that all support the whole. So we’re looking to create sub-congregations of 800-1000 with multiple pastors that deliver all those services within those congregations. So central support at that point looks more like we have a missions department that identifies activities, but your missions emphasis, the projects you choose, the trips you go on are selected by your congregation. The discipleship that you do is, this is the things that we’re doing, this is the plan that we’ve got, here’s the assessments that we’ve got, but you’re responsible to deliver discipleship within your congregation. The pastoral care that you’re doing, blah, blah, blah, blah, you’re responsible to deliver that within your congregation.

Bill: Yeah, that’s kind of what we’re doing by Life Stage. Like we say … whatever strategic initiative we’ve got, if you’re a 20-something and you’re a 60-something, how you get there is up to you, but we just want you to go in that direction. Same or not?

Ken: Yeah, I’d say that’s probably really close. There are probably some things that we’re going to heard toward that aren’t exactly the same. That doesn’t mean that they couldn’t be.

Bill: That’s interesting. Like worship time. In other words, your profit centers, your products, your projects are 9 o’clock, 10 o’clock, 11 o’clock, 12 o’clock by worship service

Ken: Yeah, and I’d say I think of it as our services or whatever …we’re defining it, we’re actually going down to saying what does it mean to be in community and define it beyond small group experience. It’s no longer just a Bible study, that you stop having Bible study but you’d still be in community. But that biblical community, that is the church. It is the church in the neighborhood or whatever geography it is or whatever the setting is. But it being the church, then you do certain things. So here’s these five things that you do, and when you do these things you’re acting like the church, the hands and feet of Christ and a fellowship of believers who are loving God, loving each other and going and making disciples.

Bill: That’s exactly what we’re trying to do.

Ken: So we got that going. Then our sub-congregation s then. Okay, here’s what a congregation does. Here’s how we’re thinking of that right now. Congregations are as simple s saying, it’s just like a church of 800. What do we think a church of 800 looks like? How does a church of 800 organize? But we do have some things that are central
services that says okay, we’ve got some things we’re providing to the church of 800 to help them do those things.

**Bill:** Right. Got you now. That’s fun. Why did you add Strength Finders?

**Ken:** Because it tests for something we felt like was very unique and very different than Service by Design.

**Bill:** What was that thing or those things?

**Ken:** Gallup did research studies on personalities as part of HR stuff and things like that and they noticed 34 different traits people had that seemed to be unlearned ability. So they called it “wiring.” They developed an objective way to test for that and they said you don’t even know how/why you do it well, but you’ve done it well your whole life. It doesn’t necessarily have anything to do with personality or temperament or …

**Bill:** Yeah, I’ve been reading a lot of those books since you and I talked last. It’s really a pretty fascinating thing.

**Ken:** It really is. It would be like the difference between like what Bill Hendricks does and a DISC profile. It’s not quite the same as that, but it’s one way to look at it. Bill’s is very similar to Strength Finders, only with Bill Hendricks’ there’s not an objective way to get there. You have to hire the voodoo expert to come in and listen to the stories and then translate them for you where Gallup’s is a low cost testing tool that sort of delivers the same thing.

**Bill:** Servants then picks up motivational areas?

**Ken:** It is personality kind of and temperament things, but it’s really helpful in knowing how to motivate people, communicate with people with language they understand and also predict how they’re going to act under distress.

**Bill:** Well, Servants is for you as much a predictor as a descriptor.

**Ken:** Yes, it’s a predictor, it’s a prescriber, it’s a tool to know what kind of language the person uses and responds to.

**Bill:** You’ve said it a couple times here. What’s the spiritual side of this process?

**Ken:** The empirical side?

**Bill:** I’m presenting the process. I telling you, man, this thing was home run. The guys, one, have never heard of such a process in their whole entire life and that’s kind of where I coined the .. my title is going to be “Good Guy or Great Fit.” Because everybody’s in the “hire the good guy.” Right? So here you have a process that begins to try to force the church to: (a) articulate what they’re looking for and (b) try and be sensitive to the people
who are coming in the door and see if there’s a fit. So, 1: that’s somewhat of a unique process they’ve never heard of before. 2: I need to say “what?” But that’s where they are.

The question came up, “Wow! This could feel to some to be a very mechanical, sterile, scientific approach and God doesn’t seem to be in this picture. And I said, absolutely not. And they said, will you ask the question, what does the spiritual side of this question look like? To compliment what looks like a computer program.

**Ken:** I’d say this. One, we’ve got some measurements for trying to discover the unique package that was formed before he was known in his mother’s womb. God says, “I knew you before you were formed in your mother’s womb” in Jeremiah. Well, that means he was a entity, he was a person, he had traits, he had things that made him how unique he is. I’d say the things we’ve been talking about are tools to try to discover the uniqueness of people. It’s very much an approach that begins by saying people are unique creations, they are unique packages, and that’s another reason why we use these different kinds of measurement tools that measure for different things. You get a better all-around look at a person than you would if you just used one thing to measure. Like DISC profile. If you’re only ever a D or an I or an S or you’re an ID or a DI or a DC. Even though those are predictors of certain kinds of behaviors and such, those are big buckets. There’s a lot going on there. But when you start slicing and dicing it more than that, it’s like well, this is a unique talent that does this, that does that. But I’d say that the spiritual side of it?

**Bill:** You know what they want? How often do you guys get together and pray over the names? They want to know just …

**Ken:** This is where I’d say, we don’t pray over them in a way where you’d be casting lots to see whose name comes to your mind. Here’s what we do. We do pray for the need, and we always pray for the person. When we’re interviewing somebody we generally will walk over and put our hand on their shoulder and pray for that special blessing, that special gift to the body of Christ, that God will continue to nurture it, use that person and just make it clear. In other words, through the whole process we’re praying with an open hand and saying we completely trust You in this process, Lord. We’re not going to force this because we like this guy or don’t like him. We trust that You’re going to lead us and we look forward to seeing how You’re going to stir our hearts after this conversation. I can’t speak for everybody here, but when I’m interviewing a person I’m probably praying through at least ¾ of that interview, “Okay, Lord, what should I ask this person? Where should I dig? What’s this about?” It’s not mechanical. It’s trying to go through his process by walking in the Spirit. Let me make a little parenthetical preaching moment. Too often I think we live our lives like evangelical deists. That we believe in a God that’s divine, that’s sovereign, that’s almighty, that’s in control, but we live it as if okay, I’m going to do what I think’s best and He’s going to bless what’s I’m doing. And so I generally lob my concerns, my prayers up there and stuff like that, and so what’s happening is that we’re doing our jobs, we’re walking our lives in a very ethical, moral flesh. We’re still walking in the flesh. We’re not walking in the Spirit. And yet we think we can walk in moral flesh, and then immediately when
we pray we’re praying in the Spirit. But we’re not. Praying in the Spirit is the expectation that God wants to have interactive communication with us on a daily, ongoing basis. And so in that, when you can remember to go there, to do that, to be expectant that God will interact with me in these moments. He won’t just from 30,000 feet away orchestrate this to work out to the best. Even though that’s true, too, that if I seek Him in this He will guide me, not just ultimately in the right outcome but in this moment I’ll know what to ask this guy next. I’ll know if there’s something I’m not seeing here about where the fit is. I’ll know if there’s a red flag here. But the whole thing, it’s chaff if it’s not done in a way that you’re walking completely within the Spirit in the moment.

Bill: So could I say it’s not mechanical, but it’s a walk in the Spirit on a journey of discovery?

Ken: It is, and I’d say the art side is and I’d say all the data issue is really good information. Everything about it is, you could call it art, you could call it intuition, you could call it being Spirit-led in decisions. And all of those are probably good descriptors of different parts of that.

Bill: All the data gives you is data.

Ken: Data gives you data, but it gives you a good starting place and it gives you things to start digging with. Here’s what happens without it: I really like this guy. I really had a good moment with this guy. Well, I don’t know what the percentages are, but some majority percentage of that is he’s probably just kind of wired like you. Cause we tend to like the people who are like us. But it doesn’t mean that’s the right fit for that job.

Bill: And that’s what I’m saying. When I said the title of this paper is “Good Guy or Great Fit” you should have seen their faces. They got it instantaneously. They went oh, my gosh. We’ve all been there. But let’s stop going there. Good guy and great fit are not exclusive, but if you’re just going to hire a good guy, you may wind up having to let that good guy go later on. And let’s not do that. I’m telling you, this was new territory for all but one of the guys, and he was at Stonebriar. That’s the only reason he knew anything.

Okay. When do you formally come to the vision and values with the candidate?

Ken: You know, I’d say that’s fairly early in the process. But it just depends. I’d say we don’t beat everybody up with it, but we do go over it. Because we don’t want people coming in thinking: 1) I can get in there and change those things. 2) We want them to be attracted to be a part of those things. So it is pretty early and often, but it’s not heavy handed.

Bill: Okay. Do you get most of your folks from internal referrals?

Ken: I’d say we used to, and we’re moving away from that now.
Bill: You’re moving away from that.

Ken: It’s not that we don’t take those, but we’re starting to look for avenues to develop relationships on-going outside the church that open it up to a broader collection of candidates.

Bill: Again, back to that broader gene pool thing.

Ken: Yes.

Bill: Do you guys have an offer letter?

Ken: Yes, I’ll send it over to our Pastor of Administration and get him to pull something out and send it to you.

Bill: Okay. I’d love it if you could do that. Is there anything in the telephone interview that you’d want to throw in here?

Ken: No. The only thing we do with a telephone interview is just try to find out enough to see if it’s worthwhile to bring this person in or not. Sometimes you can interchange telephone or email. It might not even be telephone. I’d say if we were hiring for a top level position, telephone interview, we’re going to do full-blown “tell me your story, I want to get to know you, I want to see how well you go through the full gamut on the telephone.” If it’s not a top-level position, it may just be “hey, how you doing? Heard this about you, tell me what’s going on?” We’ll do highlights on the stuff and we’re going to send you some packets and let you take some testing and then we’ll be in touch.” Somewhere in between those two.

Bill: For a pastoral position would you cover those 20 questions over the phone or is that a no way, that’s an in-person kind of thing?

Ken: No, the 20 questions, typically on those that’s pretty late in the process because a lot of those questions do start getting specific to us, too. What do you see about us? So in that we want to give them time to have discovered us a little bit.

Bill: Okay, so the telephone interview is really, if I can come up with a politically correct way to say it, it’s really screening out who you want to spend money on and take the next step and bring them in.

Ken: It’s that and it’s even, is this a person worth clearing a spot on my calendar to talk to? Sometimes that will be a factor of talking to them but also looking at what the references read, the other kinds of situations are and how strongly they feel about them, too. Like this weekend. I interviewed a guy this morning, have two more coming in tomorrow and I have a recruiter coming in on Sunday to field the church, because we’re going to use the recruiting for some other stuff.
Bill: Are you going to more recruiters?

Ken: Well, this is not a recruiter like you’re thinking about. It’s not like Greg Allen. This is a guy who lives in kind of a certain ministry space that we’re paying a couple thousand dollars a month to give us this many hours of work beating the bushes and looking for folks, and then we’ve got some bonus numbers out there if he finds somebody we hire. So we’re looking at some other things also in between the full-blown recruiter package and referrals.

Bill: In your opinion, do you think the future is in guys like Christian recruiters or not?

Ken: I think they’re really useful. I don’t like them. I think they’re too expensive. This is what we’re talking about doing now. Setting up some days at DTS, Southwestern, Talbot, at different places, and probably another guy and I will go in and it will be a recruiting day. Then we’ll probably leverage some relationships with different profs to say find us what you think the best of the best is in your classes, and we’ll set up times just to have interview after interview after interview on campus during that day for those two days just to meet some people and start some conversations, not even necessarily to hire the position.

Bill: Okay, you’re already a year behind us. Glad to hear it. Doug Cecil and I did that about a year ago. It was our first one. It was just … shoot me in the head. We thought we’d done about as much right as we could, so I’d love to hear your best practices once you finish it up, because whatever we did, we sure didn’t get into the rich vein of …

Ken: Isn’t that because 80% of those guys don’t belong there anyway? I don’t know what the number is, but there are a lot of people who go for so many reasons other than God’s called them to be a leader in vocational ministry.

Bill: We ran into a couple guys I would definitely put into that category.

Ken: But they probably already had other things working.

Bill: No, I doubt it.
PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE LETTER

Date

Candidate Name
Candidate Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Candidate:
Greetings from Little Rock and Fellowship Bible Church! We are pleased that you are interested in discovering more about the ministry staff position in ministry/position title.

The enclosed assessment tools and Interview Questions listing are self-explanatory and provide an in depth, focused understanding of your specific ministry gifts, dreams and desires in light of this particular staff role. Should you need assistance in completing any of these assessments, please do not hesitate to call.

Following is the procedural sequence for the staff search process, in which you are now entering, and hopefully will help you envision what is ahead as we seek God's will in this area of critical importance to us both. This exciting process, which reflects a natural and professional progression, is a roadmap of the new territory we are entering together!

PRELIMINARY STAGE - Cordial Introduction
This introductory stage will begin with a telephone or personal contact to initiate the search process. If you have not already done so, please submit your resume and references for consideration. You will receive from us a preliminary ministry role description (Position Focus Sheet/PFS), which highlights this particular staff position. In addition, you will have the opportunity to complete a variety of assessment tools to assist in defining and connecting ministry gifts to the staff role. With mutual agreement, it will be determined if the interest and passion exists at a level appropriate to proceed to the next stage.

PROSPECT STAGE - Careful Consideration
This second step in the process will involve a thorough reference check and a planned visitation (at Fellowship or at your location). There will also be an opportunity to focus on additional key questions related to background, passions, gifting, "skeletons", the work focus, tasks, relationships, and what FBC and Little Rock are really like! We will provide a more highly defined Position Focus Sheet, moving toward the goal of a final
model. Other areas to be addressed include compensation issues and clear timetables for the process to continue toward its conclusion. Again, with mutual agreement, it will be determined if the interest and passion exists at a level appropriate to proceed to the next stage.

**PURSUIT STAGE - Candidate Presentation**

This third and final stage is driven by the desire to reach the point of final clarity and confirmation … or radical redirection. The Management Team and Elder Board of Fellowship Bible Church will receive a candidacy proposal, and will have the responsibility of approving the timetable and plans required to continue the process. An expanded interview and visitation process, involving members of the Management Team and Elder Board, will take place here in Little Rock and may also include relating with key people in the prospective working relationship. This will also be an occasion to participate in worship services and ministry programs, as well as learn of local housing options, areas of interest in our community, etc. And, as before, mutual agreement is required before the position details are finalized and hiring/employment protocols are concluded, resulting in our celebrating the blessings of God.

Again, *Candidate Name*, we appreciate your desire to enter the staff search process. We look forward to corresponding with you in the days and weeks ahead as we follow the leading of the Lord.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Ministry Director’s Name*

*Min. Director’s Title*

*MD/aa*

encl.
Search and Hiring Process for Executive Staff ________________ 2

Hiring Request ________________________________ 3

Position Focus Sheet for Executive Staff ________________ 4

Search and Hiring Process for Administrative Support Staff _____________ 6

Position Focus Sheet for Administrative Support Staff ________________ 7
Search and Hiring Process

The hiring of executive staff will be the responsibility of either a Management Team Overseer or Ministry Director, with assistance provided by Human Resources. Listed below is the standard process for recruitment and hiring of executive staff at Fellowship:

**Preparation and Approval**
- Identify need with supporting documentation.
- Develop new PFS job description or update existing PFS (sample attached).
- Request Hiring Requisition approval from Ministry Overseer, Ken Dean and David Gatewood.
- Obtain interview packet from Human Resources.
- Discuss compensation/benefit package with Finance.

**Recruitment**
- Identify primary recruitment sources.
- Initiate contact with likely prospects, requesting resume and references.
- Conduct preliminary phone interview with key prospects.
- Potential candidates will be mailed an interview packet by recruiting Ministry Leader.

**Interview (Interview tools available from Human Resources)**
- Evaluate resumes and completed testing instruments.
- Contact primary candidate and conduct thorough phone interview.
- Contact key references for primary candidate(s).
- Determine timeline for on-site, first pass personal interview with primary candidate (OR visit primary candidate at their location to observe them “in action”) and coordinate schedules to include some elders, key staff, key lay leaders.
- Pursue additional prospects as required until "ideal candidate" is matched.

**Recommendation**
- Contact primary candidate and communicate desire to recommend them for position.
- Establish schedule for formal interview/final visit.
- Confirm complete compensation/benefit package with Finance.

**Offer/Hire**
- Ministry Leader will contact candidate and offer position, communicating compensation/benefit package.
- If candidate accepts, agree upon date to begin work.
- Communicate hire to Human Resources to coordinate orientation process.
- Contact Finance and request Compensation and Benefit Fact Sheet for the new hire.
- Return interview packet with resume and testing to Human Resources for personnel file.
Subject: Hiring Request  

Job Title:  

Proposed Salary Range: ________________________________  

Department:  

Budgeted: Yes  No  

Reason for Request: ________________________________  

_________________________________________________________________  

_________________________________________________________________  

Person(s) who will interview and hire:  

_________________________________________________________________  

**********Please attach an updated PFS for supporting documentation. **********  

Approval:  

Requested By:  Date:  

Ministry Overseer: ________________________________ Date:  

Ken Dean: ________________________________ Date:  

David Gatewood: ________________________________ Date:  

_________________________________________________________________
2006-07 Position Focus Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Information</th>
<th>Community Group Ministry:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position Description:</strong></td>
<td><strong>FBC Vision/Mission Statement:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Group Pastor/Discipleship and Evangelism</td>
<td>To equip Christians to change the world through irresistible lifestyles and influential work of service which are: Passionately Committed to Jesus Christ Biblically Measured Morally Pure Family Centered Financially Faithful Evangelistically Bold Socially Responsible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2005-06 Unifying Directives

- Provide vision and leadership for the Community Group System.
- Implement a church-wide small group system in an effort to better relationally connect and shepherd those under our care while identifying and growing leaders.
- Evaluate staff and make recommendations for the development of the small group system.
- Give oversight to the Discovery process and small group assimilation
- Recruit all required Community Group leaders for the next ministry year prior to August of 2005. Include these additional leaders in my new team structure.
- Develop a plan by June 1 to disciple new leaders and potential leaders using the material of my choice.
- Develop a plan by Jun 1 to train new leaders in Leading With Confidence.

Include Measurables, i.e., Goals, Tasks, Dates of Completion and Hours Weekly

**CG Leadership Development:** Coach and support my coaching team leaders for their personal growth and encourage leadership development from within the CG congregation. I will meet all CG leaders as often as possible.

**Hours Weekly:**
**Congregational Shepherding:** Expand my relational connection to my congregation and leaders and provide ongoing pastoral support and care of the CG congregation. This will be accomplished through having each CG under the shepherding care of either an elder or coaching leader. Each leader couple will have 4 CG groups under their care. Each couple will participate as a CG member for one quarter in each CG they shepherd. CG pastor and spouse will have all new groups that have completed D2 to our home for a time of fellowship. I will continue to do hospital visitation as needed and be available for general shepherding needs of my congregation. We will also have a Community Group leader couples retreat in September.

**Hours Weekly:**

**Discipleship:** Provide opportunities for men and women leaders and potential leaders which will allow me to pastor them in the Word. This will entail teaching *Becoming Men of Character* for men and *Becoming Women of Character* for women leaders and potential leaders weekly throughout the year. In addition, I will teach *Real Life Skills* for a small group of 5-6 men who want to learn the basics of the faith. Finally, I will develop and lead a small group of men through a 1-year discipleship process that reproduces the Faith in others.

**Hours Weekly:**

**Equipping:** Prepare and teach One to One training in the EC, provide *Dilemma of Guesses* training, and possibly a discipleship class focused on the basics of the faith for new believers in the Equipping Center. Each CG leader will be trained in *The Seven Skills for Successful Small Group Leadership* this year. Prepare and teach Fellowship Institute classes.

**Hours Weekly:**

**Administration:** Planning, promoting and administering the details related to our congregation’s involvement in ShareFest, ongoing service opportunities, and other special events and issues related to the leadership of the congregation. Participation on Management Team.

**Hours Weekly:**

**CG Pastor’s team:** Provide leadership for the CG pastoral team activities and meetings: 10 one-hour business meetings and individually meet with each CG pastor. Plan and attend the annual team celebration/retreat and 2 outings for pastors and wives. Carry out team tasks as assigned Implement a church wide coach/leader CG system.

**Hours Weekly:**
Evangelism: Continue to expand and network evangelism opportunities in the church at large specifically through the CG system (i.e., Explore, One to One, Open Forum Evangelistic home groups, other new ministries).

Hours Weekly:

Miscellaneous: This would include unexpected and unplanned for additional responsibilities that occur on a weekly basis that are hard to anticipate and plan for. Performing pastoral duties including general counseling, weddings, funerals and staff mentoring.

Hours Weekly:

Total Hours per Week:
Search and Hiring Process for Administrative Support Staff

The hiring of administrative staff will be a team responsibility of the Director(s) in the Ministry involved, and the Human Resources staff. Listed below is the standard process for recruitment and hiring of administrative staff at Fellowship:

**Preparation**
- Identify need with supporting documentation.
- Develop new PFS job description or update existing PFS (sample attached).
- Request Hiring Requisition approval from Ministry Overseer, Ken Dean and David Gatewood. - Notify Human Resources.
- Create “ideal candidate” profile.
- Discuss compensation/benefit package with Finance.

**Recruitment**
- Announce job opportunity to all Fellowship Staff.
- Human Resources will run ad in Fellowship bulletin and Fellowship website. - All applicants are instructed to initiate contact with Human Resources.

**Interview**
- Human Resources will interview, test, and screen qualified applicants. - Human Resources will contact references on best candidates.

**Recommendation**
- Human Resources will recommend best applicants for interview by Ministry Leader(s) - Ministry Leader(s) and Human Resources will agree upon candidate to hire.
- Confirm complete compensation/benefit package with Finance.

**Offer/Hire**
- Human Resources will contact candidate and offer position, communicating compensation/benefit package. - If candidate accepts, agree upon date to begin work.
- Human Resources will coordinate and communicate new staff orientation process.
- Human Resources will request Compensation and Benefit Fact Sheet for the new hire.
Assigned Person:

Effective Date:

Title of Position: Administrative Assistant (or Project Assistant)

Purpose of Position: To provide administrative support for assigned staff members

REPORTS TO:

RELATES CLOSELY WITH:

POSITION GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES
- Honor a 37.5 hour work week, with any variations approved by Ministry Overseer
- Participate in staff meetings and other activities coordinated by Staff Leadership
- Participate in orientation/training process coordinated by Human Resources
- Develop and maintain a Procedure Manual detailing the responsibilities of this position
- Embrace and practice Fellowship's Staff Values (integrity, excellence, teamwork, loyalty and innovation)
- Honor commitment to confidentiality of privileged information
- Maintain dress and conduct in a professional manner (business casual)

POSITION SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES
- Respond to callers and visitors, processing people’s requests in a friendly and helpful way, keeping accurate telephone log.
- Provide administrative support to ministry leaders in their areas of responsibility.
- Process mail and correspondence.
- Produce Power Point presentations and other printed materials as needed.
- Coordinate meetings and other events.
- Budget tracking, check requests, purchase orders, keeping orderly records. Assist in planning annual budget proposal.
- Assist in planning and coordinating team building activities and events.

PRIMARY STRENGTHS/GIFTS/TALENTS REQUIRED
- Administrative/organizational skills (ability to organize work, set priorities, and carry out responsibilities with a minimum of oversight)
- Good communication skills (spelling, grammar, composition, and speech)
- Computer competency (Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, data management)
- Ability to work under time pressures, multi-task, and creatively solve problems
- Mature team player (commitment and loyalty to staff, supportive and cooperative, teachable, demonstrating consistent servant spirit)
- Expectation of being on staff for minimum of 3 years
1. What adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
2. What causes 80% of your frustration, tension, and pressure? Why?
3. What brings you 80% of your pleasure, joy, and fun? Why?
4. What is the key to understanding the "real you" that most people miss?
5. What really motivates you? Why?
6. What is the most meaningful compliment you have ever been given? Why was it important to you?
7. Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
8. What would you like your epitaph to read? Why?
9. Are you a team player? What role would you prefer to play on the team?
10. What would you most like to delegate? Why?
11. What would you definitely want to continue doing? (not delegate) Why?
12. What salary level do you believe is necessary to make you comfortable and effective in ministry?
13. What three people do you most admire in the world? Why?
14. What are the kind of "lingering questions" in your mind ... the kind which keep coming back to you time after time and have still not been resolved ... about anything in life?
15. Which of these is the single most pressing? Why?
16. What are your spouse's three greatest strengths and three greatest weaknesses?
17. Are you and your spouse in complete agreement about your pursuing this position?
18. How well would you say you understand Fellowship Bible Church’s philosophy of ministry? Explain your answer.
19. Are you in complete doctrinal agreement with Fellowship Bible Church? (see attached)
20. From your previous vocational positions, briefly describe your experience and/or training relative to the following areas. Be sure to define the role you played in each.
   • Teaching Experiences
   • Leadership Development: Training Lay Leaders
   • Volunteer Recruitment
   • Administration: Including Planning and Coordinating Events, Projects, etc.
   • Pastoral Care: Counseling and Care for Others
   • Developing and Implementing a Ministry Plan
21. In your opinion, what are the greatest strengths you bring to Fellowship Bible Church? What is the greatest weakness?
22. Describe any previous experiences you have had related to the position you are pursuing with Fellowship. What role did you play? What was accomplished? What energized you the most?
23. If money was no object and you could develop this FBC ministry in any way you wanted, what would you do? Why?
24. Are there any ghosts in the closet that you think we should know about? (Financial problems, lawsuits, relationship issues, etc.)
25. What would you like to ask us about in the interview process?
A SAMPLE POSITION FOCUS SHEET

Name: Ken Dean

Ministry Information

Position Title: Executive Pastor

Purpose of Position: To lead and manage the FBC staff, organize the Executive Leadership Team, facilitate the strategic planning process, and lead the Missional Team in the execution of the goals and strategies of the church planning process.

Ministry Overseer: Tim Lundy

Relates Closely With: Executive Team, Operational Elders & Staff

Staff Values

Spirit Led: God Centered, Humble, Servant Leadership, Unified
Missional: Intentional, Outcomes focus, Organized, Effective
Team: Trust, Healthy conflict, Commitment, Accountable, Attention to Results, Embracing Roles, Collaboration
Positive: Fun, Believes the Best, Encouraging, Optimistic
Stewardship: Faithfully: Managing Time, Talent and Treasure well, Investing well in kingdom values, maximizing what we have been given to a maximum outcome, Generous Context, Give away what God has given us.

2007-08 Ministry Directives

Continue to develop worship department, and venue distinctives for new campus.
Continue to develop and motivate the staff towards the mission, vision and values.
Manage the implementation of the strategic plan.
Continue to develop the plan for the geographic sub-congregations.
Continue to organize and support the Executive Leadership Team

2007-08 Ongoing Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Include Goals, Tasks, Dates of Completion</th>
<th>Hrs Wkly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead &amp; Manage FBC Staff – organize, plan and execute staff meetings twice per month including staff development.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize Executive Leadership Team – plan and organize the meetings and activities of the Executive Leadership Team, and manage the non-teaching components of the team.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Description</td>
<td>Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead the Missional Team – organize, plan and execute the meetings and activities of the Missional Team.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead and Manage the Worship and Creative Arts Ministries, and manage the Leaders of the main campus worship venues.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage the Leader of the Community Group System.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage the Video department, and Leader of Print Media.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage the Leaders of FSK and Women’s Ministry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead the creation and Implementation of the Strategic Plan, and coordinate and support the Operational Elders.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the rotation as Service Pastor of the Worship Center, and other Sunday morning management.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and coordination with Tim Lundy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Sunday theme planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours Weekly</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH
SERVANTS BY DESIGN
Servants by Design®
Profile Report*

*Your Unique Design® Edition

This report was prepared for
John Doe.

By

Dr. Robert S. Maris and Dr. Jerry C. Richardson

The Servants by Design® profile is a self-report inventory and tool, not a test. It is derived from the original Process Communications Model® of Dr. Taibi Kahler. Spiritual applications of the original Process Communication Model® were developed by Dr. Robert Maris for Living Hope Press, L.L.C.. This form of the profile was created for use by individuals to explore and understand their own unique design more fully. This manual and profile information may not be used to create any other profiles, manuals, seminars, books, or in any other ways to disseminate the information either in teaching, training, or consulting formats. This manual and profile may not be used in clinical or counseling settings. Other profiles, training and support materials are currently available or under development for applications of the Process Communication Model® to other dimensions of spiritual life.

Introduction

The Servants by Design© inventory and profile report have been adapted, in part, from the Process Communication Model© developed by Dr. Taibi Kahler in the 1970's. Since its inception, this model, and adaptations of it, have been successfully used in industry, schools, correctional work, mentoring programs, clinical settings, marital seminars, vocational guidance and even as part of the selection process for NASA astronauts. It was chosen by NASA because of its accuracy in assessing compatibility between members of a team and because of the model’s unique ability to predict how people are likely to react under stress. Over the past three decades tens of thousands of individuals around the globe have been introduced to the Process Communications Model® and profited from the insights and self-awareness it has fostered.

Dr. Kahler’s original work was translated by Dr. Robert S. Maris for Living Hope Press, L.L.C. into Your Great Design©, an adaptation reflecting a biblical and Christian worldview. The Servants by Design Profile - Your Unique Design Edition© is a special application of the original model along with additional materials developed by Dr. Robert Maris and Dr. Jerry Richardson. These tools were designed specifically, and have been used successfully for several years, to help individuals in churches discover, learn to appreciate and develop their God-given gifts and find appropriate missions or works of service in which to utilize all that has been designed into them.

The Servants by Design - Your Unique Design Edition© Profile report contains these ten key features:

Personality Structure – your unique six-floor condominium  Abilities – the specific activities that best fit your design
Personality Strengths – the core assets of your design  Setting – the environment which best supports your design
Viewpoint – the perspective from which you view life  Relationships – leadership and supervision preferences
Motivators – the needs and wants that energize you  Life Tips – for connecting to others and motivating yourself
Subject Matter – the resources you enjoy working with  Potential Pitfalls – ways you may react negatively to stress

Personality Parts

Although each of us is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139), there are certain traits or areas of gifting which continue surfacing as identifiable and discrete parts of our design. We refer to these as Personality Parts. Each of us will express these Personality Parts, to a greater or lesser extent. Differences in design can be described in terms of the relative strengths and weaknesses we have in these various parts. Our personality strengths, the way we view our world, what motivates us and even how we move into negative, unproductive or self-defeating behaviors can be accurately predicted by knowing the amount of energy available in each personality part. A brief explanation of all six parts and the amount of energy available to you in each is summarized in "Your Personality Parts" on page 3. Your most influential parts, their characteristics and, the potential inherent in each are described in detail in the profile that follows.
Your Personality Parts

ACHIEVER - This is the logical, requesting, fact-finding part of your personality. Your Achiever part does not make demands or give directives. It does not even form opinions. It simply exchanges and processes information, asking questions, drawing conclusions and solving problems in a logical and sequential manner. Your Achiever crunches data with no emotions. This is the strongest part of your personality. You can draw on these abilities at all times and have the least chance of experiencing stress and moving into negative behavior when the tasks at hand call for this part.

HARMONIZER - This is the warm, nurturing and affectionate part of your personality that expresses love and concern emotionally through soft words, reassurance, permission, affirmation and appropriate touch. Your Harmonizer offers emotionally expressive, feeling-oriented, unconditional love. You have very good energy available in this part. You can call upon these traits consistently without experiencing undue stress or moving into negative behaviors as long as you continue to have your needs met in healthy ways.

PERSISTER - This is your protective part that evaluates and avoids danger. The Persister part of your personality is value-driven, measuring everyone and every experience against an internal system of your beliefs and standards. You have very good energy available in this part. You can call upon these traits consistently without experiencing undue stress or moving into negative behaviors as long as you continue to have your needs met in healthy ways.
**DREAMER** - This is the part of your personality that focuses inward. The Dreamer part is the imaginative, conceptual and divergent thinking part of your personality that considers possibilities and asks “What if?” The Dreamer’s eyes are turned inward and this part does not initiate or even respond. In order to move outward, you must shift to some other part of your personality. You have fair energy available in this part. You can call upon these traits for a moderate time as long as you continue to meet the needs of the lower floors of your Personality Structure. You must still return to those more familiar floors to energize yourself on a regular basis and ongoing basis.
**ENERGIZER** - This is the playful, emotional, and spontaneously expressive part of your personality. Much artistic expression and creativity comes from the Energizer part. Your Energizer cries, laughs, sighs and jumps for joy. This part allows you to express anger in healthy ways, without attacking or blaming someone else, and to experience and express deep grief or sorrow over losses and disappointments. You have relatively little energy available in this part. You can call upon these traits briefly but then must return to a stronger personality part to energize yourself.

**CATALYZER** - This is the part of your personality that gives commands (without attacks or threats). Your Catalyzer part gives directives, commands and imperatives aimed at getting something done. It calls others to action and/or compliance. Unlike a request, a message from your Catalyzer part does not ask someone to think or decide for themselves. It directs them to actions; to “do it”. You have very little energy available in this part. You can call upon these traits very briefly, if at all. If called upon to use these traits consistently and/or exclusively, you will experience considerable stress and/or burnout.
Personality Structure

In addition to looking at the influence and relative strength of each individual Personality Part, your responses to the inventory questions allow us to predict the order in which these parts are likely to have developed in your personality. “Your Personality Structure”, on page 5, shows the strongest, and earliest to develop, part of your personality at the bottom, like the foundation of a building. This base or “Foundation”, as we sometimes call it, is pivotal because it is the key Personality Part upon which your personality is constructed. As you will see later in the profile, your Foundation determines your strongest and most readily available “Personality Strengths”. It also determines through which of the six “Viewpoints” you will perceive, filter and evaluate your world and what things will be the strongest “Motivators” for you.

Your Personality Structure then builds upward, on top of this Foundation like the floors of a building, through other parts in which you may have considerable aptitude, gifting and energy. Our research has shown that a significant number of people are drawn to develop more fully some of the upper floors of their Personality Structure. If you have been drawn in such a way, you may find that the Motivation that is currently most important for you and the types of behaviors you demonstrate when under mild stress will not be those of your Foundation. Current Motivation and signs of mild distress will reflect the part that you are currently developing, sometimes called a “Phase”. It is as if God has awakened a new longing, new facets of your personality and, with it, the potential for new experience and expression of distressed behavior.

If you move from your Foundation to a Phase and then are drawn to develop even the next floor in your Personality Structure, you retain the abilities of your Foundation and those of what was your Phase. This “completed” Phase will show a value of 100% and is called a Stage. The next floor above it will now be your new Phase, which will provide new motivation and in which you will now develop your gifts and abilities.

Those parts that have relatively little energy and/or are likely to develop later in your life or not at all are in the top part of your Personality Structure. You may think of them as being in the “Attic”, seldom used and hard to reach. When encountering tasks and people that require the traits of your “Attic”, you will experience the most expenditure of energy, the greatest stretch, and the potential for fatigue and burnout. You may push up into your Attic floor to use the abilities housed there, but it is with considerable effort and, sometimes, awkwardness.

The lengths of the bar graphs and the percentages beside them represent the amount of energy available in, or relative strength of, each personality part. This unique feature of Dr. Kahler’s Process Communications Model® allows you to assess not only current strengths and needs, but also to predict what strengths and needs are likely to develop in the future. Because it describes relative weakness as well as strengths, it will help you to predict and understand that certain tasks and certain relationships will naturally take much more effort than others. Our life goal is not to fill out each bar or get 100% for each part. It is to become all that we were designed to be while appreciating the unique gifting and design of others.
Your Personality Structure

PERSONALITY STRENGTHS®

Achiever Strengths

At the bedrock of your personality structure is an organized, logical and analytical Achiever part. You gather data, sort facts, categorize and solve problems in a clear-thinking manner. Your Achiever part first asks, "Does it make sense?" You have the ability to set goals, collect the relevant information, initiate schedules and procedures, follow through and complete projects for which you have taken on responsibility. You are methodical and able to put off immediate gratification for an optimal final outcome. When you agree to take on a task, whether great or small, you are faithful to complete it to the best of your ability. You can lead others as an example of how to set high goals and consistently move toward them in a step-wise fashion.

---

If you compare your "Personality Structure" with others, you will discover that some have lots of energy in one or two parts while others have strength in three, four, five or even six. This is also "by design". And those of us who are specialists, with one or two areas of gifting and interest, are no less valuable, developed or mature than those who are "generalists", having a broader range of skill, talent and interests. Our goal is to fully use what we have been given as servants in the Kingdom.
You’re reliable, responsible, and thorough in whatever you have taken on. This allows those you love to feel safe, secure, and taken care of. You are a diligent worker and show your love by providing for those for whom you have taken responsibility. You respect people who are fair and honest and demand respect for those same qualities. As long as your observant and critical eye does not take on a negative, perfectionistic or superior quality, you can exhort others to higher self-expectation than they may have for themselves. You can be incisive and blunt when called for, and sometimes when not.

In a world of apparent confusion and chaos, you have the ability to stick with the facts, focus on what is accurate and makes sense, and move toward worthwhile goals in a stepwise and methodical fashion. You may have a keen interest in apologetics, Bible history or the finer points of Christian doctrine and may enjoy debating these issues with those of a similar personality bent. You consider a disciplined study and thoughtful understanding of the scripture to be an essential part of your faith. With so much work to be done in the Kingdom, your focus, initiative, follow-through and commitment to the truth are invaluable assets and a key to your areas of contribution in the Kingdom of God.

DEVELOPING STRENGTHS

Because you have developed your skills and arranged your life and circumstances to meet the needs of your basic, or foundational, Achiever part, your currently developing Harmonizer part is likely to be the one that you are most aware of at this time in your life. You may be experiencing the longings and desires of your Harmonizer part, unconditional love and acceptance as a unique and special person. The extent to which you identify with the strengths and needs associated with this part will be determined by the extent to which it has already developed in you. If you have less than 50% or 60% energy in this part, as indicated in your Personality Structure graph, you may only be beginning to experience the longings and developing strengths associated with that part. If you have significantly more energy in that part, it may be very familiar to you and the associated strength may seem a natural part of who you understand yourself to be.

In order to move toward fulfillment and avoid distress and negative behaviors, you will need to plan for and exercise the strengths of your Harmonizer part and experience the unique and special rewards that accompany exercising these developing abilities, talents and gifts.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

The term “Viewpoint” is used to describe the unique way or perspective from which each of the six personality parts views the world. Your strongest Viewpoint will be that of the first and most fully developed part, the bottom floor of your Personality Structure. As other parts develop, you may increase in your ability to see things from a different point of view, but your first will always be your strongest and most natural. Viewpoint is extremely important because most communications difficulties that arise seem to be based in a lack of understanding and appreciation for how those different from us see and evaluate their worlds.
**Achiever Viewpoint: Thoughts**

Through the eyes of your strongest, Achiever part you have always viewed the world through the windows of that floor of your Personality Structure. Even though you may have developed other perspectives as you developed other parts of your personality or as you passed through other stages in your life, your Achiever Viewpoint remains the primary grid through which you view the world. You lead with your well-developed intellect, thinking that if everyone would just get the facts and sort them out in a logical way, there would be few remaining problems. You are objective and analytical. You tend to rely on your senses for gathering the information upon which you base your conclusions. Most typically a sequential thinker, couching things in "if then," "cause and effect" terms, you are no stranger to lists. Your energy is aimed at getting THE right answer to any problem or question.

**Catalyzer Attic Blindspots**

In addition to certain advantages of your own style and preference for perceiving, you have "Blindspots" which are represented by the Attic floors of your Personality Structure. These areas, like other attics, are seldom visited, require considerable effort to enter and take even more effort to remain in for an extended period of time. Attics often contain valuable assets that, though infrequently used, are essential for maintaining a complete household.

Your only Attic is comprised of the Catalyzer floor of your Personality Structure. You may experience considerable distress, fatigue, and difficulty if required in particular tasks or relationships to consistently act, identifying opportunity and moving quickly and decisively under your own initiative in an atmosphere "electric" with excitement and potential risk.

**MOTIVATORS**

**Harmonizer Motivators**

While in the process of developing your Harmonizer part, you will hunger for relationships. You will seek interactions in which you feel special, unique, valued and unconditionally loved by others. At this time in your life you may be especially sensitive to God's unconditional love and acceptance of you, feeling chosen by God because He loved you for who He made you to be, not just because He plans to use you in some way. In every aspect of your life, this need to care for others and be cared for will motivate you into relationships where you can share the love of Christ through your sensitive, compassionate and accepting heart.

In addition to nurturing others, you will need to nurture yourself. By pampering your senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound, you can recharge your batteries, making yourself available again to give to others. A warm atmosphere, cozy chair, soft colors, relaxing music, and pleasant aromas may all add to filling this need for sensory enjoyment.
Achiever Motivators

You will always retain to a large degree the longings and needs of your foundational Achiever part. This basic, God-given, motivational structure will be expressed in your ongoing need for productive work and predictable time schedules. Planning, organizing and completing meaningful tasks or projects will remain a priority for you. Recognition for a job well done by someone you respect and admire can be an excellent motivator, although you certainly have the ability to work for long periods of time motivated only by your need to be responsible and do your best. If these basic needs are not met, you may suffer severe distress. Resting in the assurance of God's perfect timing, His unalterable plan and His guaranteed success is an important mainstay for you when everything else seems futile and out of control.
YOUR DESIGN AT WORK

When your work calls upon your natural abilities and provides circumstances that naturally spark your interest and efforts, you will experience your work as motivating, satisfying, fulfilling and even fun. You will “enter into the joy of your Maker” as you experience yourself doing “good works” which were designed “beforehand” for you to do. According to your design, as measured by this inventory, situations with the following key elements are most likely to provide the satisfaction that comes from a perfect match of labor and laborer.

SUBJECT MATTER

Subject matter refers to what you enjoy working with. This category can include concrete things, abstract ideas, people, data, or even experiences of your senses. The first table (Data * People * Things) shows the extent to which you prefer working with Data (both numbers and ideas), People (relationships of different degrees) and Things (physical objects or mechanisms).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA * PEOPLE * THINGS (DPT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DATA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEOPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THINGS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACTIVITIES

In addition to having a preference for working with certain Subject Matter -- either Data, People or Things -- in a general way, you will have specific strengths and interest in how you work with this Subject Matter. For example, you may generally enjoy and prefer to work in the context of personal relationships, dealing with People. You may prefer to work with people by providing personal services or as a mentor or counselor. “People” would be the generally preferred Subject Matter but a specific Activity would be serving or mentoring, respectively. It is helpful to know both the general Subject Matter and specific Activities for choosing a mission or area of service in which you might experience joy and satisfaction as your gifts are most effectively used by God.

In the three tables below, the Subject Matter (Data, People and Things) is broken down into specific Activities. Compare the relative strengths of the various Activities within each category of Subject Matter to begin getting ideas of the kinds of activities you are likely to enjoy and feel most effective.
DATA (Numbers and ideas)

VALUE

ACTIVITY

SYNTHESIZING AND THEORIZING
COORDINATING AND PLANNING
ANALYZING AND EVALUATING
COMPILING AND REPORTING
COPYING OR ENTERING
COMPARING AND CHECKING

PEOPLE

VALUE

ACTIVITY

MENTORING, ADVISING AND COUNSELING
NEGOTIATING AND COOPERATIVE DECISION MAKING
INSTRUCTING, TEACHING OR TRAINING
SUPERVISING AND DIRECTING WORK
DIVERTING OR ENTERTAINING
PERSUADING AND INFLUENCING
SPEAKING AND SIGNALING
SERVING AND ATTENDING DIRECTLY TO NEEDS
TAKING INSTRUCTION OR FOLLOWING ORDERS

THINGS

VALUE

ACTIVITY

SETTING UP, CALIBRATING OR DESIGNING
PRECISION WORKING AND MEETING STANDARDS
OPERATING AND CONTROLLING (AS IN MACHINES)
DRIVING OR OPERATING BY STEERING
MANIPULATING OR FORMING WITH TOOLS
TENDING A MACHINE OR EQUIPMENT
FEEDING, OFFBEARING OR LOADING A MACHINE
HANDLING OR SIMPLY MOVING MATERIAL
ABILITIES

Your abilities spring out of the Personality Strengths that were described earlier in this profile. Below is a list and description of several more specific strengths that have been extrapolated from your answers on the profile instrument. As you recall activities and work situations in which you experienced a “good fit” between you and your work, consider the extent to which you called upon and utilized these particular abilities.

1. Based on your responses on the inventory, you appear to have special ability and significant interest in the general area of Developing, especially by:
   - improving, fine tuning and making something that already exists better
   - clarifying or refining a process, product or idea by working through the detail and making it more succinct, specific, descriptive, etc.
   - improving an idea, concept or design by expanding, extending or adding to the scope of it

2. You also appear to have special ability and significant interest in the general area of Conceptualizing, especially by:
   - working things out by first going through the steps or processes in your mind
   - using mental pictures or images to actually “seeing in your mind’s eye” as a way of understanding an idea, process or concept
   - coming up with a theory or hypothesis to explain or understand something
   - bringing together, either physically or conceptually, an various things or ideas to make something new - coming up with an idea or concept in order to explain or understand something

3. In addition to Developing and Conceptualizing, you appear to have special ability and significant interest in the general area of Producing, especially by:
   - making useful articles or crafts items with your hands
   - using raw building materials to construct something physically
   - molding, forming and shaping materials with tools to make something
   - assembling pieces or materials to fabricate or make something new

SETTING

The term “Setting” is used to describe not only the physical environment in which you might best express your design, but also the emotional, intellectual and ethical milieu that will support your best efforts. It will include expectations, rules (or lack thereof) and many other aspects that make up the general climate of your work situation.

The setting that best unleashes your gifting will be one that will include: an interactive social opportunity, on a team or close working relationships in an amiable environment, a comfortable working area that feels warm and perhaps has a personal touch, flexible structure, and a place that provides appreciation of who you are at a personal level. You are triggered into action by someone’s needs or discomforts.
The physical environment that might suit you best could be: cozy, soft, and nest-like with plants, family pictures, pleasant smells, soothing music, soft colors, comfortable furniture.

**RELATIONSHIPS**

Another important determiner of satisfaction is the types of relationships that you experience in your work setting. Each of us prefers to work in certain types of relationships with our coworkers and supervisors better than in other types of relationships. The following paragraph will describe the type of leadership or supervision under which you will work most productively and comfortably.

The leadership style that you respond to best is one in which the person is valued over the task. The supervisor that fits you best is one that fosters a sense of belonging in others by interacting in a nurturing and accepting way knowing that when people feel good about themselves they do better.
YOUR LIFE TIPS

ACHIEVER - TIPS FOR CONNECTING

• Your personal profile reveals that your core strengths include being responsible, logical and organized.
• You will tend to see the world through thinking and logic.
• You value facts, accurate data and clear information.
• People will often look to you for answers and clear thinking.
• You have a knack for weighing all the information and drawing logical conclusions.

HARMONIZER - TIPS FOR MOTIVATING

• You are personally motivated when affirmed as a person, not just acknowledged for what you do.
• Relationships, family, friends, etc., are very important to you.
• You value nurturing and caring for others.
• Appropriate, meaningful touch is important to you.
• To be comfortable in a group setting, you desire lots of reassurance from those around you.
• You enjoy making your surroundings feel warm and inviting. Warm colors, good smells, soft lighting, pleasant decorations, and comfortable furnishings are all things you naturally arrange.

HARMONIZER – POTENTIAL PITFALLS

• A likely pitfall of yours is to feel that things are going so well, something bad is bound to happen.
• Under pressure, you will tend to over commit in an effort to please others.
• If you are overloaded, you likely will begin to experience self-doubt, laugh at yourself inappropriately, or make careless errors which can set you up for criticism from others.
• You may substitute sadness for feelings of anger when anger is the appropriate response.
APPENDIX H

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH
RIGHT FIT EVALUATION SHEET
Biblical Principles and Best Marketplace Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) THE HIRING CONVICTION</th>
<th>Fellowship</th>
<th>Willow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Engage in persistent prayer (e.g. for discernment)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Exercise diligent patience to “get it right”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) By using policies and procedures to minimize impulsiveness and maximize objectivity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) By requiring supervisors to take full ownership for hiring their direct reports</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) By leaving a role open rather than fill it with “almost”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(2) THE HIRING TARGET</th>
<th>Fellowship</th>
<th>Willow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to define a new team member’s role and minimum degree of fit using outcomes and the 4 C criteria of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility (e.g. a success profile).</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Define the hiring “target” in terms of outcomes and the 4 C’s criteria</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Define the minimum acceptable thresholds for each outcome and criteria</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(3) THE CANDIDATES</th>
<th>Fellowship</th>
<th>Willow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to seriously consider only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required thresholds of fit.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Consider traditional and non-traditional candidates</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Use personal and professional networks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Use referrals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Use an Opportunity Profile to surface passive candidates, if needed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(4) THE MATCHING PROCESS</th>
<th>Fellowship</th>
<th>Willow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Use the structured, behavior-based style interviewing format as a data-gathering tool rather than a decision-making tool</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Conduct no less than three of these kinds of interviews, with at least two being face-to-face</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Complete all reference checks, ideally as additional interviews</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) Complete all candidate interviews before recommending the final “right fit” match for the team</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Comparing Fellowship’s Hiring Process with the Right Fit Pattern
“Combining biblical principles and best business practices for hiring ‘right fit’ pastors.”

The purpose of this research project is to discover the beliefs and practices of expert practitioners in large evangelical churches or institutions specifically responsible for hiring pastors.

Interviews will be digitally recorded to ensure accuracy of information, quotes, and meanings in context. (Participants will be given copies of transcripts upon request.)

The responses of participants will be used in a doctoral dissertation describing the project, the findings, and the suggestions for application. The dissertation (including material from the interviews) will be submitted for credit toward a Doctor of Ministry degree at Dallas Theological Seminary. The dissertation (including material from interviews) may also be adapted and used in the future for conference presentations or print publications.

The names of all participants as well as their churches will be used “as is” in the dissertation only. For subsequent presentations and/or publications, pseudonyms will be substituted upon request to provide confidentiality.

Please substitute the following pseudonyms outside the boundaries of the dissertation…
For me: Staff Manager
For my church: Willow Creek Community Church

I understand and acknowledge my informed consent regarding this project,
Name: Rob Shearer (8/30/2010)
Part One

Bill Egner: (missing first part of sentence) what it is and where we’re going with this and the first question will be to tell my about your hiring philosophy. That’s a very open-ended question, but I know for instance Bill has written a book, *Courageous Leadership*, where he talks about character, competence and chemistry. Is that your philosophy of hiring? So you just talk to me about that for a minute.

Rob: Well, those are not more of a philosophy but a criteria that we look at, and from a philosophy standpoint what I would suggest is really more finding in line something God is calling an individual to, and I really view the hiring process here at Willow as very much a spiritual process. Certainly there is much time and energy put forth in discussing an individual’s skills, experiences, their education, all of those factors, but more importantly it has to do with can we affirm and have they come to a clarity that this is what God has called them to do. And that’s the philosophy.

Bill: Oh, man.

Rob: Yeah.

Bill: Yeah. Okay. Can we affirm and have they come to a clarity if this is something that God has called them to?

Rob: Yeah, and then really our process exists to help that person get that level of clarity. There are a lot of things that have to be stripped away for them to get that clarity. Sometimes it’s an agenda that they have themselves or its just a strong desire to be in ministry here at Willowcreek or a variety of different things and it helps to strip that away so they can get to that place where they’re just seeking out God.

Bill: How do you go about doing that?

Rob: Time is really the most key factor and sometimes its creating a tension around their impatience, wanting things to happen more quickly. When they come to that sense of tension around them, wanting things to move fast, one of the first places mature Christians will go is to God, and in doing so they will then take that time to really seek out and it’s very common we’ll have somebody come back to us at that point and say, “You know, I really wanted to do this, but it’s becoming abundantly clear this isn’t what God wants me to do.”

Bill: Wow! This is for pastors, but you may do the same thing for secretaries. My keen interest right now is in hiring pastors, so how long might that process typically take?

Rob: Oh, anywhere, I think a fast conclusion would be three weeks, normal probably six, long would be a year.
Bill: So 3-6 weeks would be somewhat typical and then up to a year, probably depending on the position.

Rob: We’ve had people it’s actually taken more than a year to get to that place.

Bill: We’ve actually had one, not with any one person, but it took us almost two years to fill one position.

Rob: We’ve had positions remain open specifically. And there have been people in the past we have approached and it’s taken them over a year to come to the conclusion that this is what God had.

Bill: Oh, I see. Okay.

Rob: Others where they’ve approached us and we’ve just kind of held out until we’ve been able to affirm this is what God has planned.

Bill: So, let’s pretend with me, because part of the philosophy, I appreciate very much what you’ve said, because my next question, because sometimes this doesn’t come out, is how do you see your hiring philosophy as different when compared to someone like an IBM? In other words, not a spiritual organism or organization?

Rob: So much easier on their part, because all they need to do is compare skills and abilities and talent and experience and education. That’s very easy to measure and quantify and say yep, they’ve got what we need. Obviously, intelligent organizations will also assess chemistry and fitness with their organization and culture, which is good and important as well.

Bill: What does that process look like? In other words, if you had found, let’s pretend this was an individual you had, someone had perhaps put this person on the church’s heart and you were going to invite them on to the pastoral staff and want to find out if God was doing that same work in their life? How does that manifest itself? That’s a very subjective kind of a process. Certainly there’s a lot of prayer that goes into that, but walk me through. Are there multiple meetings with staff or with the person? Kind of walk me through what that might look like.

Rob: First is kind of casting the vision of what the position is. There is a very specific need that we’ll have and we want to make very sure they understand what that specific need is and where we see them fitting into that. Kind of where it’s come from, where it’s going, all of the particulars, and then from there several levels of an interview process typically starting here in HR where we’re mostly assessing is this the right person for our staff or our culture here at Willow, the temperament and personality and passions that would fit well with us and the staff and also to some degree with the team we’d be inviting them to join. Then we’d get into more specifics within the ministry context itself with the immediate manager or supervisor and also the peers that person would work
with, either paid staff or lay leaders, and then beyond that moving into more senior leadership and then finally our elders to have to affirm anyone in a pastoral position.

**Bill:** Sure. I’m trying to be politically correct. I’m trying to get my thoughts together here. If HR interviews a person and says we think they share our chemistry, which is kind of like what it sounds the initial screen is, and you get to this person is going to be in the pastoral department, can that pastoral department say thanks, but you whiffed on that one. We’re not interested in this guy at all? How does that hand-off sort of thing work?

**Rob:** Well, you know it may come to three or four individuals I’d bring to their attention and say why don’t you connect with them, see if they have the right abilities for what you’re looking for and then you would see do they mix in well with your team that you’ve built and from that they may say yes to one or no to all of them, but take this further with a couple of them.

**Bill:** So is it fair to say what you and your department look at first is, I keep going back to the character and competency and chemistry aspect. I’ve found those three terms to be so helpful. You put calling on there also, which I think is tremendous. You guys sort of first of all screen an overall chemistry fit.

**Rob:** Yes. It’s kind of the role the elders have asked us to play from a consistency standpoint that we are bringing people into this process and into an ultimate position here at the church that fits with who we are as a church and one of the things Bill has said to our staff many times is we live with the culture that we create, so we want to make sure these are people that are positively contributing to the culture we have.

**Bill:** Right. That’s so wise. I think it is. So if they make it through the initial filter, then you might have two or three or four or some number of candidates and you would turn them over to the department that was looking to fill a particular role.

**Rob:** Right.

**Bill:** Then that department begins another series of interviews?

**Rob:** Yeah. And those interviews would be more in line with the specific work we’re going to have them do and then as well the team chemistry.

**Bill:** Okay, so at some point if they say out of the five, two of them are good. We’d like to take the next step with two of them. The three who didn’t make it, does the HR Department send them a thank you but no letter?

**Rob:** Sometimes. We try to keep it an informal. Whoever talked with them last should communicate with them. But some people, in my experience, some people don’t do that well. It’s not an easy thing to bring that news to somebody, so if the manager or department head, ministry director or whoever isn’t comfortable or that’s something they’re not going to be real good at doing, then I’ll do that.
Bill: Okay. So let’s say, then, I’m down to two. How do I begin to, in other words, are there other instruments that you use? Do you begin to try quantifying some things, or do you just say, you know what, we’ve got to keep praying and we’ll get back to you in 30 days?

Rob: Sometimes it really is a hard decision where there are two people that if there were two positions we’d hire both of them if that’s the case, which it does occur. Then we take it to the next level where we bring them both to a couple members of our leadership team and say “here’s our need and here are two individuals we feel equally strong about. Help us decide. Then they would take a stand.

Bill: Does a department head . . . forgive me I’m just making things up. I don’t know a better way to say it. If one of your teaching pastors said “I want to hire this person” and then we kind of do a one-over-one. If I’m going to hire at this level, then the supervisor gets involved kind of as a check and balance on different things, does the department head or that teaching pastor, can he say “I want to make the hire even if Bill said ‘I really don’t think that’s smart’”?

Rob: That’s never really been the case here. Really that’s where HR comes into play and the elders have empowered us to in essence kind of say “no” to whomever we feel would be right to say “no” to. We try to broker that a bit and negotiate that with people if there’s somebody feels real strongly versus another person feels real negatively, then just getting them into a room and saying let’s hash this out and then kind of handcuff them to the chairs and say nobody leaves until we get this figured out. That’s what we try to do. It doesn’t occur very often, though.

Bill: I’m going to back up and then I want to keep going down that road for a bit. What instruments? You’ve talked about calling or feeling so you have that shared sense of God’s call in their life. Are there any instruments that you use to help assess the chemistry?

Rob: We have to some degree in the past and we still today utilize one type of personality assessment. The thing I’m cautious about with these instruments is that they are completely fallible. So the advice and counsel I give to the candidates is that we only would use those to affirm things we’ve already seen to be true about the person We wouldn’t use that to say” we didn’t know this about you, but we’re not going to move forward because this test now says this about you.” It wouldn’t happen. Through experience they all have their flaws.

Bill: Sure. Does that mean you primarily hire from within, because you’ve had the opportunity to see them in action?

Rob: Well, we actually view in concentric circles. The first place we want to look when we have a need here is within the walls of Willow. That means staff, lay leaders, congregation members, anyone who is involved in the church. That’s the first place we
want to look. The second place we would want to look is with the Willowcreek Association churches. We feel like there is a like-mindedness with those churches. Then the third circle outward would be just all the rest. So that’s kind of the filtering process I use.

**Bill:** Let’s say it’s an Association person. Again, I’m just guessing, so correct me when I’m wrong. How would you put a Meier-Green test in front of me? Let’s pretend it’s me. You’ve never really met me. I fill out, maybe you have some kind of written application, so I’ve filled that out, you’ve reviewed that, you’ve called my references by that point?

**Rob:** No. We hold out on that.

**Bill:** How does that personality assessment affirm rather than inform if it’s a person who’s in circle number two?

**Rob:** The assessment that we give, and we give that at the beginning of the process, so using you for an example, if you expressed interest in a position, you sent your information and we reviewed your information and felt like there was some potential here or for whatever reason felt like it was worth the next step, we would send you the small short little assessment we have people go through and then I would engage in a conversation with you. If you were out of state, that would first be on the phone. Again, I wouldn’t put a lot or weight behind that assessment I just received because I haven’t met you yet. I don’t know that much about you. I’m will read it over, but I’m not going to make any decisions based on it.

**Bill:** Okay.

**Rob:** So then if after our first conversation, if that goes well, then we’ll have a conversation with you and our ministry director, and if that goes well we look to fly you in town and get some time to meet you, and I can tell you first hand that it’s very eye-opening to have a phone conversation with someone and then meet them in person because they’re often very surprised and it can go either way. But you just never know. You can tell a lot by meeting someone in person.

**Bill:** And I presume you try to see them in various situations?

**Rob:** We try to create as much as possible in a legitimate way, but we will create some social activities that might be a gathering of small group leaders that going to do some social activity. Because they’re here on our dime, we flew them in, we’re going to have them participate in that. We let them know they’re going to be evaluated. So be yourself and have fun but we’re going to be evaluating you as well, and most smart people would know that. We try to catch them as much as we can in as many different situations as we can.

**Bill:** Fellowship Bible Church Little Rock has almost a two-page outline. I think they even send it to the candidate. It’s kind of a top-level “here’s phase one.” And there’s a
little paragraph almost. Here’s what we do, here’s what we’re looking for. Most candidates don’t make it to phase two. Those aren’t their exact words. Then there’s a phase two and then there’s a phase three. If you make it this far, then . . . it kind of outlines for them what the entire process might look like. Do you guys have something like that?

**Rob:** No. We’ve played with that a bit and what I’ve seen from other churches (I’m not familiar with what the church in Little Rock does), a lot of what that typically entails is assessing doctrinal stances to make sure there’s an alignment there and what we’re looking for is what doctrinally is the person most passionate about? That to us is the most important thing. And that’s not going to come out on a questionnaire. So eventually only through personal interaction we determine their energy level about a certain . . . you know someone who’s a pastor, someone who has a passion about one or a few doctrinal issues. So we try to make sure they align with who we are as a church.

**Bill:** Okay. I think in the email that I sent to Colby, if it’s confidential I totally understand. If it isn’t, would it be possible for me to get any kind of policies or procedures that you have written as a church for hiring? You know, you have blank applications.

**Rob:** Oh, well our application is on our website.

**Bill:** Okay, how about sometimes churches have written, it may be one paragraph, it may be two pages, here is our hiring policy or hiring procedure. It kind of lists here’s what we do first, here’s what we do second, here’s what we do third.

**Rob:** Yeah, we’ve kept that pretty loose. There is a paragraph, again, on our webpage where we post all of our job opportunities and the reason why we keep that as flexible as possible is we really feel like the process needs to be flexible. The Holy Spirit doesn’t always follow steps one, two and three and so it’s hard to dictate that out. If I do dictate it that creates expectations for people and expectations, when you don’t meet them, that’s when you hurt people. So if I keep that fairly fluid and say this is what the next step will be, this is what will happen next, beyond that point we’re not entirely sure, but you’ll hear from us in 10 days and if someone is interested in moving forward you’re going to hear from this person. If I can keep that kind of expectation alive with them, then I think we’re doing okay.

**Bill:** Okay for some reason you’re interested in me or I’m interested in you, we talk on the phone, the first interview, the first-time conversation goes okay, and you say to me, well, you know, I’ll be back to you within a week. Or you know what, you might hear from me. Would you give that person any kind of . . .

**Rob:** We get back to everybody. If we’re not interested we’re going to get back with them, so I typically know who it is I need to speak to here, who the ministry director is, or the department head. I kind of have a sense of what their availability may be so I may say we should be able to get back to you in a week to 10 days or I may say you know
they have a large event happening here so it might be 2 weeks before you hear from us. So I try to create again realistic expectations. If we can honor the people in the process I think we’re doing okay. So just creating realistic expectations.

Bill: Well, I’m fascinated by this. I’m trying to process how a church as large as yours . . . we have maybe 6000 people and a hundred on staff. I can’t even imagine doing life at your scale. So I really truly am fascinated by this. To listen to FBC Little Rock, they have a very, I wouldn’t say rigid, but I would say a very well-outlined process of how they go about hiring. You guys sound a lot more Wild West about the whole thing and I think, egad the communication burden and responsibility is enormous.

Rob: Well, again, that’s why I want to keep it fluid so I will basically just describe the next step. Because I can be pretty assured what the next step will be. I try to keep people informed, but I’m not going to create a picture of exactly what’s going to happen and the time frame that it’s going to happen in because I can’t predict that, and all you wind up doing is missing the expectation that you set nine times out of ten and then you’re upsetting people unduly, so keep it fluid and I can guarantee you’ll hear from me in the next ten days. I guarantee that. What will happen three steps from now I can’t guarantee that.

Bill: Sure, sure. I guess I’m thinking internal communication – the department that might be looking to hire. How do they coordinate and communicate with you? Is there one central database?

Rob: We tried that and it’s just more stuff, you know. I need to sit down with the ministry director and kind of talk them through my interaction with the individual. We’ll need to spend some time praying about it, so if we’re looking for a pastor of a small group ministry, which we are, I meet twice a week with our main overseer of our small groups here and we review the people that we have in the process twice a week. Just for half an hour each time and we talk about people I’ve recently spoken to and people they’ve engaged in the process with and where they’re at and any communication we need to flow back to the candidate, so keep it moving forward

Bill: Are there multiple ways in? In other words, does everyone have to funnel through HR or if the small groups department says “hey, we know a guy,” can they start interviewing them?

Rob: Absolutely. We don’t want to be the obstacle, and if God is working through bringing someone here through any means . . . I mean sometimes it’s meeting Bill Hybels at a conference in Zimbabwe. Whatever means where that takes place we want to honor that because God may be in it and we want to check it out.

Bill: So rather than seeing yourselves as a gatekeeper, you really see yourself as a facilitator.
Rob: To some extent. I think the gate keeping comes into our charge from our elders to see that the right people are coming on board. As you know, and I think you mentioned, there are varied skill levels and servant abilities in people. Because a person is a great leader, because a person is a great pastor, doesn’t mean that they have the ability to discern the right or the wrong people, so we’ll play that role.

Bill: And you’ve found that the Spirit of God seems to, if I’m hearing correctly, seems to have worked through your teams and your process. In other words, there’s not one hiring guru who reviews every applicant and says “this one stays, this one isn’t right,” something like that. Does what I just said make any sense?

Rob: Well, you know, everyone must pass through me. At some point they will, but I’m not the front door. At some point they’ll have to. Again, that’s just the charge from our elders.

Bill: So you’re part of the process and an important part.

Rob: Yes. Every process, though, HR is involved in. So for example if we’re hiring a pastor for our small groups ministry and through a conference they found an individual they felt very strongly about, and because they’re there at this conference they meet with this person and just become sold that they’re the right person, that’s great, it’s awesome. The next step would be here at HR, then senior leadership, then our elders.

Bill: So there’s a fixed process even though it’s a very fluid process. You’re at level one, level two, level three, etc., etc. I’m always amazed at how God does great things so differently indifferent churches. FBC Little Rock is a great church, they’re doing a great ministry, they have a great process. Willowcreek is a great church, great history, doing a great work of God. You have a totally different process.

Rob: We have a lot of fun, and there’s absolutely nothing wrong with other ways of doing this. It has to fit with who the organization is and we do an awfully lot of HR network with people from other large churches and we sit and talk or we’ll chat through emails about different things and there are 18 different ways of doing things and it kind of has to fit with who God created that organization to be.

Bill: I have some more specific sorts of questions. Do you have a written job description before you make a need known?

Rob: 90% of the time yes.

Bill: And the other 10%?

Rob: The other 10% is because either we’ve identified somebody that we go “you know what, there’s a need we haven’t identified yet they’re here to meet.” And so we better kind of get about that. Another situation is where we’re in the process of kind of figuring out what we need and at the same time we’re figuring that out we’re cognizant of trying
to find somebody and we run across somebody. So those kinds of scenarios do occur but 90% of the time we have an identified need, we describe that need in writing. From there we take that and put the word out.

**Bill:** So 90%. 10% God knows better than you do.

**Rob:** Well, I’d say most, 100%, God knows better than we do. But we’ve identified our thoughts on what we need. Sometimes, though, God precipitates us and has already brought along the person and from seeing who God brings along we go “Aha, there’s that itch we haven’t been able to scratch yet.”

**Bill:** Okay. When you create a position description, is there a format or a template or certain things it has to contain?

**Rob:** It’s very traditional and HR related. The primary purpose, the responsibilities and then just some general thoughts around their skills, abilities, education and spiritual giftedness.

**Bill:** Skills, abilities, personal giftedness. Again, we were using me earlier. If I was on staff and wanted to hire somebody or felt there was a need out there, does HR have to approve that and there’s a “go ahead” given before I could start that process?

**Rob:** Yes. There are two questions we have to be able to answer. One is where are the resources going to come from? Obviously there’s a limited resource pool to work from. We have to figure that out. The second question is, do we need this? How does it fit into the overall picture of what we’re trying to do here?

**Bill:** Who helps work that question to a conclusion?

**Rob:** We have a lot of different processes around that. Some are more formal than others. Current day is the ministry director will kind of work with me to define and create what the position could be, then they will work with their leader and then that leader will bring that to their peers and the overall leadership team of the church for approval. But first would be what is it we need someone to do and then how do we resource it? Once we’ve identified that, then the leadership of the church decides if this is a worthwhile priority to go after?

**Bill:** So is there a sort of formal or informal supervisor sign-off before you really go after that particular position?

**Rob:** Well, I’d say it’s both, so the description is created, the resources are designated, where the resources could come from, and the person in leadership who oversees the ministry that is requesting a position would then bring that to the leadership group here and they would decide whether or not to move forward to allocate the resources that have been identified. When they do, they just give a verbal “go forth” and we go forth.
Bill: So that senior leadership team, if I’ve understood our previous conversation and the beginning of this one correctly, you would help me as a staff member begin to answer the question, what is this position really supposed to do?

Rob: Yes, I would do that with the ministry director and once that’s all put together it would be brought to the leadership team to make the decision.

Bill: I that the management team?

Rob: Yes, we’ve had many names for that group over the years but it’s currently called the leadership team. Management team, leadership team.

Bill: So that’s really the key, ideally longer-term, senior leadership who understand the culture.

Rob: Predominately how does this fit into the priorities of what we’re trying to do? There are a lot of needs we could identify that would be very worthwhile to pursue, but how does it fit in? If it’s not part of our current priorities it takes us off in a different direction we don’t necessarily want to be headed to right now.

Bill: Right. You have to keep the main thing the main thing.

Rob: Yes, so initially I can help guide that. I won’t make the decisions around that, I’ll just guide that. If I feel what one of the ministries is asking for seems like it’s not really fitting into our overall strategy, even though it’s a great thing, I’ll help the ministry director to see and understand that, and that way we don’t have to involve the leadership. But if I feel this could really serve in getting us forward momentum in what we’re trying to achieve and we can adequately describe it and resource it, then we would pass our packets out for our leadership team to approve or not approve.

Bill: I need a little clarification. When you identify the key priorities would those be longer than a year?

Rob: Yes, we currently have three key goals we’ve identified right now through the year 2010.

Bill: Okay. Where I’m going with this is, you just decide we’ve prayed through this and we decide God is calling Bill and you’re comfortable with that and I’m going to come on your staff I would come to a particular role with a particular set of priorities or goals but that would last through 2010?

Rob: No. In a typical sense, the needs we’re looking to fulfill to hire for in a sense, those would be pretty much on-going, but how do they fit into the current plan that we’re trying to achieve? If they don’t we need to put the pause button on or in essence say no for now.
Bill: So the hires aren’t just to fulfill a short-term agenda or goals, they’re actually folks who have enough gifts or capacities that they can be value added to the organization for a longer time.

Rob: Yes, and there have been times throughout the history of the church where we have brought some folks on with the understanding this is going to be a short-term, maybe a few months, maybe a year or longer but there will be a point where this project you’re going to do for us will come to an end. We’re very clear, but it’s very rare in the history of Willow.

Bill: Okay, so if I were going to come on staff September 1 you would say to me, and in the course of the discussion of course, these are the immediate things we need you to do.

Rob: Yes, that would be detailed out in the job description. This is what you’ll work on, this is what you’re working on to reach the overall goals of the church.

Bill: Alright, and that’s the written position description that is there 90% of the time is fleshed out to that level of detail.

Rob: Yes, and the other 10% of the time we will create that description. It’s just after we’ve already identified the individual.

Bill: Do you, as a part of the natural course of events . . . in other words, I fill out the application, say, online. What happens to a resume; if I send an unsolicited resume what happens?

Rob: Well, a couple things. We’ll review it, and if I can directly see something there that fits into what we have as a current need then I would probably set up a time to chat with you about that and say “We have this current need here at Willow and you seem to be investigating opportunities, so here’s what it is. Are you interested?” We would just go there. If we can’t identify a current need, then one of two things will happen. Either I’ll connect with you and talk about where you’re at and what you’re thinking about and what God’s doing in your life and see if I can identify a current need or if I can even see in the future where a need may come about that you could fit and then we would have that dialog. If I can’t, I’ll see that and let you know right away. I don’t see where your background experience and what God is calling you to do fits into where we’re headed and just let you know that.

Bill: Okay. When you get a resume from me, let’s say you asked for one, is that an important part of the dialog process, the resume?

Rob: I think it’s to get your information so we know who you are, what you’ve done, where you’ve been, and it helps to kind of move the process, the conversation along a bit so I don’t have to sit there and take down your resume if you will. I just need to know what you’ve been doing and how you’ve been doing it, and then that aids me in my conversation with you about those things.
Bill: Do you agree . . . we’re going to talk about performance . . . do you agree that the best indicator of future performance is past performance?

Rob: In a general sense, yes. More specifically it tends to be more true here at Willow. I know that’s not always true at other churches, but I think in our culture, because we are such a performance-driven culture here at Willow; so if I can get a sense of what you’ve done and how you’ve done it I can have a better sense of how you’ll fit here.

Bill: Would you call that a cultural fit?

Rob: For us, yes. If I can see you’re more a strategic thinker and you’ve been a part of and led many strategic planning processes and problem solving and working through issues and challenges to figure out how to get where we want to go and we have some very specific needs around that, then I’d say yes, that’s a great fit. If you’re more of an implementer and you’re great at carrying the ball and getting things done and we have needs around that, great. So those would be some of the things we would look for.

Bill: Okay. You said you used the standardized written application from the website. Really, there’s nothing other than that, is there?

Rob: Most folks will accompany that with a resume. It’s just kind of the standard business practice. People like to create something other than the application so they’ll send us a resume.

Bill: Okay. If it comes with references on it, do you check those references or does the ministry leader check those references? Who begins that process?

Rob: We like to hold off on the references until we’re getting near the conclusion. The reason being, and this is just from practice, a lot of times the references include current work associates and most folks, it seems, are checking out a need that we have here but they haven’t necessarily informed people. So we don’t want to upset the applecart unnecessarily and I don’t like to break bad news to people. So we’ll hold off on that until the final stages and then once I’ve gained permission, and it’s very deliberate to say are you okay if I go forth now and check some of your references, we’ll do that. We typically will do that in HR. If a ministry director would like to do that I’ll coach them through it, but I think it’s great or them to get the direct feedback.

Bill: For the ministry leader himself or herself to make that.

Rob: It’s great but many times they’re just not equipped for that.

Bill: We hate what’s happened down here with the minister of a large Baptist church. I don’t know if it’s made your news or not; it’s all over our news. In a large Baptist church a minister has fallen into one of those stings where they do the Internet person posing as a young girl.
Rob: Yes, I think I read about it.

Bill: Here at Christ Chapel we have standardized applications, and part of our application process, even from the very beginning, is you agree to let us run background checks. Is that part of how you guys do things to try to at least look under those rocks from the very beginning?

Rob: We do criminal background screening, but we hold on for that to kind of the final stage since there’s a cost associated with it. So with the number of applicants we get it’s not really cost effective for us to do it on everybody. And it’s somewhat intrusive, too. If we’re not going to move forward with you, there’s no point in digging up your background for you. So we do that. If there’s a pastoral role or really any role here at Willow that does involve children, students or vulnerable adults, which is a term that has been added to this, there is a more lengthy process that we do in relationship to our child protection. But that is segregated from the hiring process, the reason being that many of the questions that would be asked in that are not completely legal in the hiring process. So it’s separate and then our child protection people basically give us a thumbs up after they’ve completed that protection process.

Bill: So it’s part of your overall protection strategy but it’s not a screen.

Rob: In essence we out-source it to an internal ministry here to do that. HR doesn’t conduct it. We can’t.

Bill: The criminal part.

Rob: Well, we do the criminal background, but with regards to the protection process which involves more the sex offender registry as well as checking out some references in relationship to how this person has interacted with younger people – children, students or vulnerable adults, just to be sure there is nothing in their past history that indicates an issue there. And because of the kind of questioning that goes on in that process we in HR can’t really be involved in that. But we still want to be sure we conclude that.

Bill: I hear you very clearly.

Rob: For safety reasons. And so we do that and out protection people will not give us any details around it. That’s how we’ve established it. They won’t give us any details. They’ll just let us know kind of a “pass/fail.”

Bill: Okay, talk to me just for a second about that. If I’d gone down the process with you, we really believe God’s at work and there’s a great fit, you run that protection thing. I would hope that never happens. Is that a 10% thing for you guys; is it a 1%.

Rob: Where there’s a denial done by the protection process?
Bill: That comes up there at the very end and you have to say “oh, my gosh!”

Rob: It’s actually never happened.

Bill: Never happened. That’s fantastic!

Rob: No, and if it did we’d contact our attorney right away and say “what do we do?”

Bill: Yeah! Good, because we’ve actually run into that a couple of times. We do ours a little bit differently. Protection nonetheless, but yeah. It’s good that you have a plan. It’s yucky. It’s really yucky.

Rob: My guess is that we would stay out of it and it would be strictly a conversation with the candidate to say we’ve decided not to move ahead. We don’t sense God is involved in this. Keep it as unobtrusive as possible, just saying thanks, but no thanks.

Bill: Okay, yeah. That’s good work. We talked last time that you don’t really use, or you said you had used instruments like a DISC test or Briggs. Is that a standard part of the process where it goes into a file or is it “we don’t need to affirm it in this person. We’re good.”

Rob: Anything we do from a documentation process needs to be part of their file, so if we do a personality test that becomes part of their file.

Bill: Is a ministry leader given the freedom to pick a particular instrument or has HR said “we will use the Myers-Briggs?”

Rob: There are two things there. One, we’ve not had that happen, but if it did what I’d have to say then is we have to use this instrument now with every candidate for this kind of position. The law requires consistency there. So it has to be the same instrument at the same stage of the process we would use it at, which is not bad. It’s just something you have to do.

Bill: Right. So how does that work itself out? You let the ministry leader decide if he or she wants to do that instrument?

Rob: Again, we have a standardized one we use right now and we provide the feedback generated from it to the ministry director. So far that’s been sufficient. None of them have ever asked can you do this specific one opposed to the one that we typically do. Many of our teams of existing staff have gone through the Strengths Finder and utilized that in the context of teams and so we do have several people here who have been trained in interpreting and dialoging in the context of the Strengths Finder, have been trained in that and so after a person has been brought on, strictly from an understanding of how they’re going to fit into the team after they’ve already been hired and it’s an informational piece so the rest of the team gets a sense of who this person is, we will do that. It’s not for every area, because not all of the areas have chosen to go through that.
Bill: So in a post-hire fit/training kind of module, how do you interface with the team, that kind of thing?

Rob: Yeah. When we do the first step with the team itself, we find it very helpful for team members to go through that together and go “now I understand why you react a certain way or why you think a certain way. It’s about your wiring and it relates as well to my wiring.” And so when we bring someone on that team we want to do the same so everyone has equal footing to understand each other and how they’re wired up.

Bill: On a Strengths Finder, you’ve just found that Strengths Finder is more helpful than, say, a Myers-Briggs or something like that?

Rob: When we’re in the hiring process we do utilize the personality test called the Predictive Index. It’s one we just started using about 3-4 years ago and found it to be moderately helpful and it’s very similar to DISC and Myers-Briggs.

Bill: Is that an on-line test?

Rob: No. It’s a paper where people circle little dots and we feed that into software and then it spits out a little narrative about the person.

Bill: Forgive me. Is that a confidential, in-house sort of thing, this Predictive Index or is it another industry thing sort of like a DISC test?

Rob: You can purchase it, yes, out of Atlanta. It’s a pretty innocuous thing. Again, it can provide some insights but again we’d just use it to affirm things we’ve already seen.

Bill: Okay. So I get hired on staff, I’m going to serve with a team of five other people. I’ve already gone through the Strengths Finder and now I’m added into the team and there is now a facilitator who helps the team?

Rob: We give you a book, you read through the book and in the back of the book there’s a number. You go on-line and fill out this little assessment for the Strengths Finder.

Rob: When you’ve completed that, give this person on our staff a call and he’ll meet with you and talk about it and then from there the two of them will get together with the rest of the team and say “we’ve been through this with all of you. Here is John’s new deal regarding his Strengths Finder and everybody has that information.

Bill: Okay. I’m kind of new to Strengths Finder. I took it. I think it’s interesting and looks very, very helpful. I don’t have any track record with it to say, you know what, in five years out of the top five they give you, you know what? Two of them are always going to be wrong. Because a person just doesn’t know himself that well.
Rob: It comes about really through the conversation, having someone who has been trained in its use, specifically in the context of a team. There is the opportunity to evaluate the feedback from it and come to a consensus with the facilitator as to what feels accurate and what we want to share with the team.

Bill: And so the facilitator, once you’re trained, I meet with you, you talk me through the results, and you say “from what I understand right now, this seems right.” Then you would, with me, go to the team and begin that massaging process?

Rob: Yes, because they’ve been through it with him or her individually and the team together already so there’s a familiarity there.

Bill: What other kinds of things, if I called, I mean some of that Strengths Finders stuff, it’s all tremendous information to have. Every hire is a calculated risk. You’re just trying, in a sense, to discern God’s voice and mitigate the risk for the church. We’ve talked about personal interviews. What other kind of things do you use to assess a DNA fit? You know, the cultural fit, because some people are pretty savvy and read what they think it is you’re looking for and try to share that with you. I don’t know that I’ve ever had anyone do that, but . . .

Rob: You can dismiss that out. Part of my responsibility is to dismiss that early on and to try to identify that with the individuals. You know, kind of get real. In essence I do it a lot more diplomatically but if I don’t sense a receptivity to it, then it’s basically no. If you’re going to put up a smoke screen trying to make yourself look like us for the purpose of attaining some sort of position here at Willow, or what ever your agenda may be, we’re going to stop that right away.

Bill: As a person who sniffs that stuff out, what’s your top one or two things on Strengths Finder? Is there something you’ve found that a person who exhibits this kind of strength has that nose?

Rob: No, because we would use the Strengths Finder after hire, so these are folks we’ve already identified and hired onto our staff team. And so we have attained a level of confidence that they’re real people, they’re one of us, as you will. So there’s not a concern there. It’s the people who are entering the process we kind of want to sniff out those that are maybe wanting to snow us a little bit.

Bill: Sure. I guess I’m coming in another way and you’ve been very consistent in your answers so it’s interesting, because I’ve kind of thought of some of the instruments definitely as affirming but certain times somewhat predictive. Meaning that if I had a person who was, say, an extraordinary administrative assistant and I DISCed her and did Strengths Finder, then I might learn in what we’re asking this particular person to do, someone who’s wired this way, might be someone if this person were ever translated to heaven, we might be looking for a similar kind of wiring. Does that make any sense what I just said, or are you just praying for me?
Rob: I’m trying to track you. So someone is an administrative assistant. You’ve met them and you’ve done an assessment with them and feel like there’s a consistency in their wiring to what we are.

Bill: No. I totally threw you for a loop, and I know we just talked about pastors, so I’m taking a left turn here. Let’s say I had an administrative assistant who had been here a number of years, five, ten years and does an extraordinary job. I DISC her. I Meyers-Briggs her. I Strengths Finder her to try to uncover if he or she were translated to heaven tomorrow and I had to replace that person. Would I be looking for someone who has connectedness as their greatest strength or someone who has achievement? You see what I mean?

Rob: Yes. I understand what you’re saying, and I think there’s an intuitiveness that happens in that way, but I think I’d fight against that to remain pretty open to whom it is that god’s leading along. I mean, in a crass sense, we’re always looking for someone who’s going to be better. And so you have to know baseline what was there and kind of what the previous person brought to the table and baseline we want to make sure we’re minimally bringing that back likely. I mean, it could be something different, but if it’s a direct replacement, admin for so-and-so, and they really liked their admin and so we want to find someone similar in nature, you kind of have an intuitive sense of who they are and what they’re going to bring but always keeping in mind there’s always some kind of weakness happening in the area right now, and so what can we do with some new strengths to kind of enhance an area? Again, we haven’t found any kind of assessment other than through personal interaction that really draws that out.

Bill: I half believe the answer is yes, but have you ever, but maybe you guys are really good at this. You hire me, and I think these are my strengths, etc., and you do. Two to three years down the road we both say, “gee, that’s not your heart and your strength; this is.”

Rob: Yeah.

Bill: Does that ever happen?

Rob: Oh, sure. Obviously we work very hard to prevent that, because minimally there’s a cost associated with that but most importantly there’s a loss of ministry that’s potential but also the effect it has on the individual and the team and so on, so we try and prevent it, but sure, it does happen. At that point we want to kind of work with that person to figure out where would they best fit? They’re already here and they’ve already demonstrated that there is a good chemistry fit within the church, so let’s see where else they may fit. And we do actually use some assessments in that as well. There’s one we’ve found specifically very helpful. It’s called the Flippen Profile and we use for individuals who have some sense of change, things aren’t quite where they should be for the work they’re doing, and we want to help them figure out where the miss was and where we can maybe kind of plug them in that would be a better fit and/or how can we help them or how could information help them figure out where they need to go next?
**Bill:** And why do you do that later rather than earlier, say in the hiring process?

**Rob:** Because the information is really only helpful to use in light of what we can see they’ve done. Again, there’s no assessment that’s going to give you the accurate picture of the individual. They aren’t completely infallible, so I don’t want to give somebody something and say “now I know who you are” versus I give somebody something and say “okay this, combined with who I’ve seen you to be does help to complete the picture.”

**Bill:** I see. Yeah, there’s no. I agree. You can’t plug all this information into a computer and push a button.

**Rob:** A lot of people try. A lot of organizations try. I just don’t buy that. Maybe there is, but I haven’t seen it.

**Bill:** Yes, and that’s why I’m asking the question. The Fellowship Bible Church, which again is a tremendous church and a tremendous process, is so interesting to hear.

**Rob:** Well, again, maybe it works for them. I just never has worked for us. That’s just how we function well. I’ve heard of other churches, organization, para-church organizations that utilize these things and have found tremendous success, and I have to some degree been curious about that and like, “wow, what are we missing? Are we doing it wrong?” And we’ll sort of pull out things and test them out and it just doesn’t work for us.

**Bill:** Yeah, and you have been the tool in the Redeemer’s hand. I know the answer. All I have to do is get another one like Fellowship and I’ve got this thing wired, and God has said “you know, it doesn’t work that way.” It’s a very different process perhaps for each church. But each church has become knowledgeable and comfortable about their process.

**Rob:** Yeah, and it should be continually evolving. We should always be looking for new ways to improve and learning from your experiences. That’s a continual thing and just the normal way of doing it as you learn. As you go and pick up new information.

**Bill:** What I’m finding is pretty interesting, because hiring isn’t, you guys have an entire department as well as a savvy staff. Same thing for Fellowship. We’re trying to grow that area here over the past couple of years. The churches in my circle of influence that I’ve been talking to, hiring is so low on their priority meter, that sometimes it could be a different person leading the hiring every time. And they wonder, how come we can’t? You know, you’re never going to be 100%. You just have a kind of consistent process, and ideally people are going to grow and evolve and become more savvy in those things.

**Rob:** And that’s where I think our elders again just insisted upon consistency and certainly there will be different people involved in the hiring process but they’ve insisted our team here is always involved no matter what the position is.
Bill: So, how do you institutionalize that consistency?

Rob: We just do. It’s common knowledge that you cannot hire someone here – I mean, HR holds the key to the payroll system, so no one’s getting put into that thing until we’ve signed off on them.

Bill: But if – I’m presuming, if a church is not where we are, and we’re sure not where you are or even where Fellowship is. Like I said, we’ve recognized this weakness and I’ve been trying the past couple years to work it through and sniff it out. How do you begin to put that kind of culture in place? How do you help a church who’s a church of 200 and there re two people on staff? How do you help them?

Rob: One hire at a time. Each circumstance that you’re looking to move forward with and use your best logic and rely on God to lead you. Remain kind of prayed up and submitted to the Holy Spirit’s leading and learn from mistakes. Just kind of take it one at a time. That’s probably an over simplistic answer.

Bill: No. It’s definitely one I’m just wrestling with, I’m interacting with. You said a couple words this time. Maybe you said them last time and I just missed them. But it seems to me if I were to try to put a label, and I realize that’s dangerous and unfair, but if I were to put a label on your hiring process you said there is an intuitiveness about it. Your intuitiveness is part of your process that you’ve worked very hard at developing and intuitiveness..

Rob: Yeah. It’s interesting, because like for example there was a time here. There’s a term that’s used in many organizations and certainly it’s been well-adopted here and that’s the DNA, our term Willow DNA. We spent some time trying to pinpoint that. How do we describe that? It’s very difficult, but we know it when we see it. At one point we had over 100 adjectives to describe it. This was just kind of a fruitless effort, because we already know “it,” and as long as we’re consistent in keeping those who come onto our team and especially those in leadership roles here have that themselves and understand it clearly, then we’re good. I don’t know if Bill Hybels can even articulate a description of the Willow DNA. He might, but I don’t know.

Bill: We call it wearing the blue blazer. All we know is we know it when we see it. And we say “you have it,” whatever “it” is you have it and now as I kind of write these characters of foundation, if a man or woman doesn’t have character, we’re done. Number two, as I recall from Courageous Leadership, Bill had put competence #2. I actually in my Oreo cookie put competence as the top chocolate wafer? And who am I to Bill but no one, but for me the squishy good stuff is chemistry. And it’s much harder to get your hands on but in our experience, the chemistry, the fit, the “are you wearing the blue blazer” has been second only to character. And that the person who wears the blue blazer, so to speak, we’ve found that we can train many things into that kind of a person. Certainly we can’t give them what God hasn’t chosen to give them, but we can definitely train in some things. If the person doesn’t wear the blue blazer, then we can try our
doggonedest to train them and it just seems to be throwing stuff in a black hole. It never comes back.

Rob: Bill spoke on this last year at the Leadership Summit and he said, you know, character is a non-negotiable. A person has to have the spiritual maturity and ability to be a model to others from a spiritual perspective and have a prepared lifestyle ready to be in ministry and then second to that would be the chemistry. There’s no point in – nobody wants to do ministry with people they don’t feel well with, don’t like. Then the competence – we can teach them what they need to do if that’s not necessarily there. Best case scenario they know how to do it, but if not we’ll teach them. They can learn it.

Bill: That’s sure been our experience. That’s why I started with those three words. For me that was a very important, informative concept to get hold of, and I appreciate you adding called to the beginning of that. I think those are really good criteria. It’s an excellent model.

Rob: It does fit well at least in our culture, and usually it’s the calling that comes out of an assessment of those others and you can affirm them. You can meet somebody and go “I really like hanging out with them, but this isn’t what God has in store. This isn’t God’s plan for this individual.” Boy, they’d do a phenomenal job, they’d do the job really good, they’ve got great experience, but this isn’t where god’s leading them.

Bill: Yeah, and they’d be happy to do it all by themselves.

Rob: Yeah. And so again, they all kind of fit together but the calling really is independent and comes along at the conclusion of a process where you make that decision. You discern in essence what God is up to in the life of the individual.

Bill: Yeah. You are a decision maker in the hiring process.

Rob: Yes.

Bill: If somebody said I was the greatest thing since sliced bread, you called me and said “oh my gosh, I couldn’t have been more disappointed,” you could at the very first phone call say “we’re done.”

Rob: I don’t do that in the call. I may make that decision in the first phone call but I don’t communicate that for two reasons. One is that it’s pretty harsh to do in the first phone call. Second, I do just kind of want to check on myself and make sure I’m making the right decision. So take a little bit of time just to pray about it and say, “God, am I making the right decision?” I don’t inform the individual in the phone call that we’re done.

Bill: Of course.

Rob: I get back to them.
**Bill:** But in the sense of you being a decision maker, you have the elder-given authority to stop a process very early-on if you felt that was God’s best.

**Rob:** Yes.

**Bill:** It goes on, okay, so you talk to me and say “yes, he is the greatest thing since sliced bread,” you take me to the next two or three levels. Are there always decision-makers in the room who you go up to at the end of the interview and debrief and they say, “you know, we’re just not interested in going any further.”

**Rob:** Yeah. When I’m meeting with a ministry director I kind of like to lay that out and say we’re going to have whomever we bring into this process meet with some people for interviews, so let’s make that list and once we’ve made that list I like to go through that list with the ministry director and say who is it you want to get some feedback on this and who is it, if they said “no,” the answer is “no.” So I like to make that list with the ministry director in mind and with them in the room to kind of call that out and then when we will undergo the process with an individual and they go through those interviews and we get feedback from all those they’ve met with, again elevating those that the ministry director and I have agreed with and said they have the decision-making ability, if they say “no,” then the answer’s “no.” We’re just seeking some feedback. They may say no, but we want to know why and then we may continue.

**Bill:** I see. Okay. But that list is made up ahead of time.

**Rob:** Yeah, we do that ahead of time, but it is a fluid list, because we can and we very often will change and/or add and subtract people from it.

**Bill:** In your debriefing on your candidates, I’ve made it so far and I come out and interview with you, I’m meeting with the right people, I go home, you guys debrief. Is that group, individual, written, oral, standardized?

**Rob:** As much as possible, as humanly possible, I like to make a group decision. Sometimes it’s just conference call with everybody because sometimes they’re not here, they’re at home or traveling, and so to make a conference call I kind of lead it and say “okay, John, you met with them. What did you think?” In essence kind of thumbs up/thumbs down, kind of go around in a circle, a virtual circle sometimes on the phone and say “give your feedback.” If somebody is saying, “Wow, absolutely hire them. Let’s do it tomorrow. Get them here.” If the third person in the row says “I don’t think so,” then I’ll engage those two people in a conversation with everybody and say “okay, you’re saying do it, you’re saying not,” so let’s wrestle through that. That’s the value of doing it in a group. We do want to get feedback in writing as well. There is some legal precedent for that, but again it just helps from their file to have some thoughts about an individuals. It helps me to know the abilities of some of our interviewers which it changes, who interviews and who doesn’t. It gives me some written assessment about who is doing the interviewing so I can keep track of that myself.
Bill: Is that form confidential? Could I get a copy?

Rob: The form itself is not confidential, if that’s what you’re asking.

Bill: I’m not asking for a filled out one.

Rob: Yeah, the form itself is virtually just a blank sheet of paper. It has the name of the person, the position, the interviewer and then just a bunch of blank space. Some people here insist on that form. It’s kind of strange to me, but others email is fine. I can work with that. I’ll have people leave me a voice mail and then I’ll just type it out.

Bill: I see.

Rob: So all of that’s fine.

Bill: You’ve put together this list and you’re going to talk about me, so let’s debrief on this and do you, in the group that you’ve pulled together ahead of time and now you’re debriefing, does there have to be a unanimous decision to go forward?

Rob: There does from those we’ve identified as the decision makers. If we’re going to basically violate our own inner practice, we want to make sure that we’re doing that intentionally. Let’s say that. We’re violating our own practice by going against one of our own decision makers. Let’s call it out. So that doesn’t happen very often if ever, but there are people who identify more from a feedback standpoint and they’ll say “yeah, I think you should hire them” and we’ll go ahead and hire them.

Bill: And then who has the senior leadership? If it’s a pastor makes a recommendation to the elders who have the final say on the hire?

Rob: After the ministry and the group we’ve identified meets with them, if there’s a strong affirmation there, we would take them to one of our senior leaders. If they affirm them, then in essence what we’re saying to our elders is this is a person we want to hire. We believe strongly they can do the work and they’ll fit in our culture. But the elders do hold the final authority. They’re not going to care, and they’re pretty blunt about this, they don’t care if the person can do the job. They leave that in our hands to figure out. They want to make sure this is the right step for our church.

Bill: So a senior leader, it doesn’t have to be the whole team.

Rob: Depending on the position. Like if it’s position that’s going to, and I’ll just use an example, we have regional campuses and at a regional campus we have an overarching leader title, the campus pastor, who is a pastor to that segment of the congregation, before hiring one of those we want Bill Hybels to sign off on him. So he would be the senior leader.
Bill: Okay. So from a ministry standpoint the appropriate senior leader says “I bless this” and then it goes to the Elder Board.

Rob: And nine times out of ten we do have an HR director, Colby Burke, who is the senior leader here who will affirm these people. Already having received from one of his peers as a person who is going to work in his area that he’s good to go on that person, you don’t actually have to have interviewed the individual but just during the feedback they’ve received from their direct report, their ministry director, etc., they’re good to go, then we’ll set him up with our HR director, Colby Burke. He signs off on him, then we take him to an elder.

Bill: Okay. Do you have anything like a probationary period?

Rob: Are we still talking pastor positions?

Bill: Yeah. Like you hire me. Texas is an “at will” state which means the Elder Board, which holds all the keys at our church, the Elder Board can say, “Bill, we don’t like anything about you anymore and here’s a box, clean out your desk.”

Rob: Yeah. Without cause, barring discrimination.

Bill: Correct.

Rob: Yeah. We’re the same here in Illinois. So we’ve always avoided, especially in pastoral roles, any kind of trial periods or anything like that. In essence we’re all in a trial period. It’s our affirming, in my opinion, to bring somebody on, we want to try you out. When I bring somebody on I want to be affirming about it, and I want to wholeheartedly say we believe in you and we want you to do this. And we believe you can do this and we’re behind you 100%. I don’t want to bring someone on and say “You know, we’re not too sure about this but we’re going to give it a try.” That’s not affirming.

Bill: I’ve run across churches who have that and I’m with you. I’ve always found it interesting, but I thought maybe I’m missing something.

Rob: Well, it’s not very affirming to the congregation that this person’s going to be leading to say, “Well, here’s what we think. We’re going to put the guy in this position and he’s going to leading you or caring for you and if you don’t like him, that’s okay. We’ll get rid of him.” That’s not a good way of doing it, at least in our context.

Bill: Do you have any orientation sessions besides the Strengths Finder? You know, there’s a 4-week Willowcreek College for every new hire?

Rob: No, we’ve talked about that and it would be nice if we could do something like that; we just don’t have the capacity. We do an orientation, or in essence we walk people...
through, we have a staff guideline which is just kind of some general policies about being on the church staff. It’s pretty loose.

**Bill:** Is that something I could get hold of or is that a confidential thing also?

**Rob:** I can check. We don’t liberally pass that out. It’s not something you’re going to stay up at night and want to read. I can check on that. We go through that, and we do for every staff member something we call respect in the workplace. It’s a video we created to kind of walk people through appropriateness in the workplace. And they do sign something saying they’ve seen that and that’s part of their employee file. Then if there’s ever an incident, any kind of harassment of any type, we’ve dealt with that with the individual coming onto the staff and so now we can refer back to that because you’ve kind of violated something you already knew about so . . .

**Bill:** Is that the responsibility of HR or is that the ministry leader who does that?

**Rob:** Does what?

**Bill:** Does the little, you didn’t call it an employee handbook, and the Respect in the Workplace.

**Rob:** HR does that.

**Bill:** Okay. Does all those things.

**Rob:** Yes. We’ll schedule a 2.5 hour time sometime within the first week of the employee starting and there’s a lot of forms for them to fill out, you know, all the fun stuff, and we go through that. We’re looking at ways to maybe spice that up a little bit, but it is what it is. It’s just necessary things you’ve got to do.

**Bill:** Our culture makes certain things necessary.

**Rob:** It is something we have to do and we try to make it as painless as possible, but also due to the significance of it you need to know these things but we do get through that.

**Bill:** Last question. I so appreciate your time. Actually it’s kind of a 2-parter, but it revolves around, it’s not necessarily a pastor, although that would be fine. But how about nepotism? How about hiring family members?

**Rob:** Yeah. Our kind of, I believe it’s written, policy is that a family member cannot report to a family member. We have almost 600 people on our church staff, so family members can work on the church staff and they can even work together although we do discourage that. They can work in the same ministry together, but we do discourage that. It needs to be a pretty compelling reason to want to do that.

**Bill:** For them to work together?
Rob: For them to work together on the same team. It’s not a good thing. There have been certain cases where it’s worked out well, but generally we want to try to avoid that. Like I said, even if you have a pretty compelling reason and the ministry director wants to hire spouses or any kind of family member together, but they cannot report to each other. A person cannot supervise a family member.

Bill: So, by default, in other words some churches have a policy that says we will not hire family.

Rob: Yeah, we don’t do that.

Bill: You’d say, which is I think what we say, we want to hire the best person. If that best person happens to be a member of your family they definitely cannot report to the family member. And we have to do everything we can to make sure they’re treated fairly. You know, no special favors or privileges or anything like that.

Rob: Right. And then again just not being on the same team together, because it changes the team dynamics and not necessarily in a good way. So we do avoid that. An example is, we briefly had a spouse apply for a position as a part-time administrative assistant and her husband worked in that ministry. He was not the ministry director, so the admin would not be reporting to him, but in talking to the ministry director, I said you know, she’s very capable and very competent to do this work, but do you really want this spouse to be part of your team? Having them working together on the same team? Do you want to lead spouses like that? It’s going to change your team meetings, it’s going to change some of the dynamics of how the team interacts. Is it really worth that? Or maybe we can find some other place in the church for her to work. And that’s what we ended up doing. I think everyone was better served all around because of that.

Bill: Yeah. I gather you don’t create an ideal candidate caricature before you go hire someone.

Rob: No. I think we have something in mind and oftentimes what we have in mind is proven wrong by God. So I think we try to stay as open-minded as possible. A lot of times what I do just for myself is grab hold of the first few candidates that come in just so I can get a sense through an interview with someone of what’s God up to with this position? And so after interacting with a few people I can get a sense of now I have a handle on what God’s leading us toward. Either because the people I’ve talked to thus far are right in line and there’s a strong affirmation I sense from God on one of them or they were all not what we’re looking for now. I just need to think about what we are looking for.

Bill: I see. I see. Rob, I can’t tell you how much I’ve appreciated this. It’s helped me. It will really help many other churches. I’ll go to class, God willing, when I get back from Ethiopia. I’ll write up my case study, I’ll present it to another group of executive pastors. I’d love to be able to call you after that class. I usually have some follow-up questions.
Rob: Sure.

Bill: It’s not at all to slam Willowcreek. It’s just to say here’s how Willowcreek hires. Last year they heard how a different church hired, and it’s just a fascinating area for all these guys. We’re all up to our eyeballs in it and I very much appreciate your transparency to let me kind of peer inside the back room and ask you these questions. If there’s anything you think of, you say, “Gosh, Bill might want that” and it’s not confidential I’d love it if you’d email it to me. Just so I’d stick it in an appendix. You never know whose church it helps by having a little piece of paper that says “here’s two things you could do” or “here’s a folder,” something like that.

Rob: Yeah, you bet. And I’d love to get a copy of it when you’re all wrapped up with it as well.

Bill: The case study?

Rob: Yeah.

Bill: Absolutely! I’ll send you the completed one. I won’t send you the draft. That’d be too embarrassing. But I’ll send you a completed copy when it’s all finished.

Rob: Great. It sounds good.

Bill: Thanks, Rob, again, and have a great day.

Rob: You, too.

Bill: Thanks.

Part Two

Bill: Thanks for doing this. I really do appreciate your doing this. It was the hit of the class again, because this is right where so many of the guys live. It’s just great hearing the behind-the-curtain stuff of what other good churches do, so I really do appreciate it. You really have blessed a bunch of guys and we walked out with a lot of great questions and insights about how to go about hiring. So I do want to thank you for that.

Let me make sure, because in the last couple times I’ve seemed to skip over things like your title. That’s staff manager, is that true?

Rob: Correct.

Bill: I wanted to make sure, because that’s what came through on one of the emails you sent me. I just wanted to make sure that when you see yourself in print as staff manager, you’d say “yeah, that’s me.” How long have you been at Willow?
**Rob:** I’ve been on the church staff for just about 20 years now. We didn’t have an HR Department then, and just over 10 years ago became part of the HR team. HR’s been around about 15 years.

**Bill:** How many folks, and this is off the cuff. I’m not going to say Rob said he’s hired exactly this many people, but about how many people would you say directly or indirectly .. I mean, is there more than one of you?

**Rob:** No.

**Bill:** So Colby has one right-hand man, that’s you, and so under you in the past ten years about how many people would you say you’ve hired?

**Rob:** Excluding like high school kids that do facility care here, there are about sixty a year so, say, 600.

**Bill:** Now how many of those would be pastoral kinds of positions?

**Rob:** It’s hard to say. I don’t even know how I could guess at that.

**Bill:** Okay. That’s unbelievable. One of the guys had a great question. He said, “You know you had a great time talking with Rob. How many people has he hired in his life, three?” I mean, everyone laughed because they knew. But that would be interesting for the paper, to give some kind of background, a little bit of hand holding as to you and your … you are an expert as far as this case study goes so I want to be sure we give you the credit you deserve. You haven’t just hired three people in 1 years.

**Rob:** I’d have to give a few paychecks back if that were the case.

**Bill:** Six hundred in 10 years. That’s amazing! The next questions was, do you feel like there are any best business practices like from Peter Drucker, from Jim Collins, from the Harvard Business School. What would you say are the best business practices, if any, that you al use on a regular basis?

**Rob:** In relationship to hiring, in relationship to staff management?

**Bill:** In regard to hiring.

**Rob:** In hiring. One of the things that has really impacted our current thinking and what we’re trying to work toward, there’s a book that’s very well known in the marketplace HR arena called The War for Talent. Are you familiar with that book?

**Bill:** I am not.
Rob: It’s very, very well known. There’s a chapter in there called Rebuilding Your Recruiting Strategy, and what that has to deal with it that recruitment happens continuously. It is not necessarily for a specific need in the church or the organization. It’s for the organization you work for, so you’re continually recruiting. It’s not solely the function of HR, but it is the function of everyone within the organization.

Bill: Boy, great point. The War for Talent, and who’s the author of that?

Rob: There are a group of people who wrote it. Ed Michaels is one. Helen Handfield-Jones, and Beth Axelrod.

Bill: They’re the DNA of recruitment.

Rob: Yes, we’re trying to shift the culture here a little bit, specifically with our management and ministry directors to helping them see that this is their responsibility and you don’t wait until you have a need. You’re constantly and continually developing networks for recruiting so that when your needs come about you’re already to go.

Bill: In a sense, you’ve always got somebody in the pipeline.

Rob: Yeah, absolutely. One of the phrases I’ve come to use is in major league baseball they have a farm system. Every organization should have a farm system whether it’s formal or informal that they are tapping into for their current needs.

Bill: Great idea. How about in terms of just the hiring process, the one you walked me through these past couple of phone conversations? Some business practices would say, make sure you have a job description. Drucker would say you don’t need a job description, you need to know the three tasks you want them to do. The church I interviewed last time said, well we use this instrument and that instrument to try to get at the people’s chemistry idea. Those kinds of things I’m just kind of checking my learning. It seems to me you guys didn’t use very many, if any, of those kinds of things. I’m just kind of checking to make sure that I may have missed something.

Rob: There are several things we use, most notably and for obvious reasons. Bill Hybels described in one of his books, Courageous Leadership, a process called the 3 C’s. Are you familiar with that?

Bill: Absolutely.

Rob: So that, for obvious reasons, is a method we use in selecting individuals for staff. Also I think I’ve come to really value Jack Welch’s 4E’s. I don’t know if you’re familiar with those, kind of identifying again a temperament about people related to their energy, their ability to energize, their edge and their ability to execute. Those would be a couple things we use more from a marketplace standpoint.

Bill: Those are done through your conversations. There’s no formal instrument you use.
Rob: No.

Bill: Okay. Even when it comes down to character, somebody had asked the question, how … that’s always a wiggly one for all of us … it’s through the conversations, and I don’t think you do the reference checks until a little later on. It’s really just prayer and conversation, I would imagine pointed, but trying to surface character issues from say, Timothy and Titus?

Rob: Absolutely. When I think of character, there’s a spiritual authenticity that we’re looking for and, you know, is one thing, so there can be some folks out there, especially in church work, that maybe aren’t … when they present themselves within the context of the church aren’t necessarily as authentic as we would like them to be. They wouldn’t fit here. So we want folks who are real. They have real struggles in their lives and are seeking to work through those struggles through their relationship with God. That’s what we’re trying to do and that’s what we’re trying to teach our congregation to do, so that’s who we want to hire are people who are authentic about that. From a character standpoint, being someone who has sort of a self-awareness, understanding their own strengths and weaknesses and understanding where it is they are striving to grow. There’s something currently they’re working on in their life that they’re striving to grow in. To me, that’s a character issue.

Bill: Okay. So it’s not really like Gene Getz, I’m not sure you’ve read that book maybe, but something along the title of biblical eldership or something. Anyway, the Fellowship Bible Church movement, of which he was a great part of starting that, he’s really sold out on character-based leadership. When the early church discerned the elders, it was based on character. It wasn’t based on chemistry. It wasn’t based on all these things I want it to be based on. It wasn’t based on a man’s competence. It was based on his character. So anyway, it’s sort of been fun mentally interacting with that to say … we actually visited a church this past summer, a Fellowship church, and that’s how they hire. It was solely on a man’s or woman’s character based on the 1 Timothy 3 and the Titus 1. That was just interesting to me. I thought, you have to shift people around, I guess, after a while.

Rob: I’d love to see that in five years, to see someone who’s been there for five years, to see how viable that is. It very well may be, but my question would be around predominantly the issue of chemistry. I mean, do you have a group of people now who just don’t like each other that are working together? How does that work?

Bill: I’m with you. I just thought, well that’s interesting. I don’t see it, but …

Rob: Yeah, I would predict a high level of either inter-organizational issues happening or high turnover or something, but God bless them if it’s working.
Bill: Well, interestingly enough, the church I interviewed last year is Fellowship Bible Church and they incorporate many, many marketplace instruments as far as their hiring process. That was an interesting sort of paradox.

Rob: It’s not that we’re opposed to any of those instruments or assessments or anything like that. Nothing we’ve tried has compared with your hands-on, get-to-know somebody, talk with them, dig around in their life kind of thing. So it’s not that we’re opposed to it or think anything’s wrong with it. They’re great tools. To me their purpose would be for efficiency. It would be about okay, we can do this much quicker by having somebody take this test instead of talking with them for hours. Well, I haven’t found anything that does that yet.

Bill: From what you’ve said before, you talked about Bill’s 3 C’s and I think you said you added another one in there about calling. The idea that perhaps, and this was actually the thing that charged our class up the most, was instruments. We all agreed they can and probably are beneficial, but if it does become a way to exclude potentially God’s man, then maybe it’s gone too far.

Rob: Yeah, and I don’t know that God will let you do that, to be honest with you. At least, that’s been my experience. If God has somebody in mind, you’re not going to be allowed to get in the way of it.

Bill: So part of your, whether it’s personal or corporate, but you’re in a very directional capacity there is, part of the reason you don’t use instruments is just for that reason.

Rob: Well, yeah, they can be very helpful. I would have no objection to throwing in a Myers-Briggs or a DISC or any of the current tools that are out there, but they don’t tell me more or less or quicker even than what I can get out of having several conversations with a person. And then I have a measure of trust in others around Willow’s discernment ability versus some off-the-shelf kind of thing. Again they can be helpful, but I would only use them to validate things that we had already established through conversation. And right now I don’t feel like we need that. We might down the road.

Bill: I think that’s really important what you just said, that you’ve developed a measure of trust not only in (I’m putting words in your mouth) your own intuition (we’ve talked about that before) as well as those around you and that an instrument isn’t going to rival that sense of trust that you have.

Rob: No, but I don’t want to portray it like we’re 100% here. We’re not. We make mistakes and some of those mistakes can have significant impact, so that does occur and I’m always striving to learn if we’ve made a hire of someone I was fully affirming and then a year or two down the road things go awry with that person and there’s all kinds of problems created, I want to learn about it. How did I miss? Where did we all miss on this? So I don’t want to come across as we do 100% perfect, because we don’t.
Bill: Well I also hear in you, and I hope you take this as a compliment, you love people and you love learning about people. And if a person in hiring didn’t share some of those qualities, that could be difficult. You might not get a good hire of anybody. If you have a person who’s come from IBM (and I’m not slamming IBM), they know how to use the instruments, but there’s not a love for people, there’s not a love for God’s church, and there’s not a heart to love to learn, that might be important for the people doing the hiring as well.

Rob: Yes, and just quite frankly, some folks are really good at deceiving others and they have something on their mind, something on their agenda, and yet they have the ability to be deceptive. And so some folks are just really good at that. And at the end of the day you have to just conclude that wow, we missed on that one but I don’t know what we could have done differently because they deceived everybody. And what could we have done?

Bill: Yeah, at a certain point you have to say God bless us.

Rob: And pray for protection, that God would prevent something like that from really hurting other people, because that’s the ultimate effect it could have, that it hurts a lot of people. You bring somebody on and they end up being destructive and people end up being hurt or misled or what have you. So we have to pray for protection, that God will prevent that from happening.

Bill: That was another thing that our class picked up on. This is not pro and con from one church to another, because it’s fascinating learning for us. In one church, the church I talked to last year, they did say probably early on in the conversation, well the first thing we do is pray, and then he proceeded to unfurl the process which, by my temperament, I love that kind of stuff, but in hindsight as we compared Willow to this other church just in our class it was fascinating to see the difference. And you wonder … gosh I’m actually going to go back to that first church and say tell me more about the prayer part, the conversation with God part, because I sure hear it loud and clear on your end and I don’t know how you’d do it otherwise basically relying on conversation. It was interesting, really, really interesting. Who’s really trusting what, not just what you say but how many times does it come out in the conversation?

Two more questions, and I promise we’re going to be done.

Has the hiring process, you may be familiar with it from 20 years ago, but at least the last ten years, has it always been this way? If not, has it changed, and if it’s changed is that coming from an external prompt, as for example you looked around and said you know what, great things in the marketplace but we can’t take this much marketplace into the church. Theologically, philosophically, we’ve hit a point where we say no more. Or is it because the sort of post-modern mindset of story rather than don’t pigeon hole me, is there some reaction, some strategy that says we’ve had to make some changes because, because, because.
Rob: I would say there have been shifts, nor necessarily in the process itself but in our focuses, and sometimes those shifts were good and sometimes not so good. Sometimes they are precipitated by God doing something, so for example in the early days of the church when we first got started here, everyone who was being hired was part of the congregation. Because that’s all there was. There was no WCA, there was no network of churches, there was no visibility of Willow. We’d just get someone doing stuff here and we’d say that day job of there is just in the way of them doing more so let’s get them out of the day job and give them a paycheck and then they can do more here and they would do it. I think there was an era, probably more in the mid-90’s where we . . . I don’t know why this happened, and to be honest with you I don’t know if it was good or bad at this point . . . but where we were really drawing people outside of Willow into staff positions. It just seemed like every time we turned around there was another person either from California or Texas here. I think they brought stuff to us as a church. They brought fresh new ideas to us and some of that has stuck. I’d say most of it has not, though, over time. We’re in the era now where, I think more so than ever, God is raising up people from within our congregation to do this ministry kind of work here, and in many ways it’s that success to significance step. In the last six months I’ve had probably two dozen conversations with people who have resigned their position in the marketplace, sold their home and downsized to a smaller home, all in preparation for going into vocational ministry. So they did all that before even coming forward or getting ready. So that’s a God thing. God’s out there doing something before we even get involved in it. We just need to read the signs and say now it’s all about, our focus is going to be about people inwardly here. We’re not going to close the door to the external people who are interested our antenna is going to up more so around people who are inward.

Bill: As a church then, on a Myers-Briggs for example, you would say that Willow is probably, let’s see the last one is a J or a P, right? Isn’t a P something about keep your options open? Would you say as a church that’s probably more true than less true?

Rob: Yeah, it’s shifted over times. There are degrees of that, obviously. I think in the past were very much a little bit longer-range planning and we always had some sort of five-step plan in place and I think now we’re much more open to be directed from this step to the next by God.

Bill: So moving from more sort of strategic planning, not that you’re discounting that, I didn’t hear that, but allowing the reaction or response to where the Spirit is taking you to now be equally directed.

Rob: Yeah, I’ll give you a for-example. Recently one thing we’ve been playing a lot with here is our weekend services, experimenting and trying new ideas and in a recent staff meeting Bill said he felt we were about 60% of the way there in figuring out what our weekend services should look like right now, and he said that with an amazing amount of comfort, just feeling very comfortable in the fact that there’s still 40% of it we haven’t figured out yet. We’re just going to wait for the Spirit to lead us to what the other 40% looks like.
Bill: So really no launch until you feel like you’ve got as far as God’s going to give you.

Rob: Well, there’s an experimental element there where you try stuff and you go that’s not where God is, and you go “let’s not do that again” or you do something and you go “wow, God was all over that. Let’s do it again and see if that happens again.”

Bill: So the sense of, in Jim Collins’, maybe it wasn’t his first book, but the one before Good to Great, Built to Last, he talks about one of the 7 things that great companies did or do. They balance the strategic planning with what he calls branch and prune, which is the experimental site. In other words, you say strategically this is where we think we need to go, but the branch and prune says we’re not quite sure how we get there and we’re not quite sure that there may be something really cool that branches off of here that we haven’t even thought about. (Start at 26 minutes)

Rob: Right. It actually becomes the direction we need to go in ultimately anyway.

Bill: Yeah, ultimately it may say, “look, there’s God over there. Let’s shift direction.

Rob: Exactly.

Bill: I remember reading that and you’ve just sort of resurfaced that thought in my mind to combine both of those two. Would you say that you’ve combined both of those two or would you say that it’s really shifted. It used to be more strategic 80/20 and now it’s more 80/20 see if you can’t discern, discover, respond to where God’s going.

Rob: I don’t know how to put percentages to things there, but I would say it has shifted, that we’re much more open and comfortable in experimenting and/or waiting on God.

Bill: Much more comfortable in experimenting or waiting on God. Do you actually have a church R&D? You know, Research and Development Department?

Rob: Yeah, nothing official. I think there are just a bunch of creative folks here. You put them in a room and lock the door and let them come up with a bunch of stuff and you see what’s feasible or not feasible and then you run with that.

Bill: Final question. There’s folklore and legend floating around that Bill Hybels has shown up on a video clip, probably at a Summit or something. But somebody in the class remembered this. I’ve never seen it, but I’m coming straight to the source, or as close as I can get. And he saw Bill talk about how they hire pastors. And he said he invites them into his home, they share a meal, and at the end of the meal, as the story goes, Bill gets up and maybe takes his place at the sink and begins cleaning it and he waits to see if the pastor picks up his plate and brings it to the kitchen sink. And again, as the story goes, if all of that happens that is the man, and Bill says “we hire him.” Have you heard anything like that?
Rob: You’re trying to take a circumstance that occurred and make a practice out of it. It is a circumstance that occurred where Bill and a guy named Gene Appell,. Bill had been discussing with Gene a long, long time about coming to Willow. Gene always kind of pushed back and didn’t come that direction. There was a conference going on and that night they had a bunch of leaders and pastors over to Bill’s house for dinner, and it just occurred that Bill and Gene ended up doing the dishes together and Bill felt a prompting from the Holy Spirit while they were doing the dishes to say, “Gene, I really think God’s leading you to come to Willow” and it was in that minute that Gene felt God’s affirmation on that. So it’s not like a practice. It just happened in that case, so that story has kind of been changed.

Bill: That’s why I said it’s moved into folklore. These guys said, “ask him, as him if that really happened. I’m actually relieved that it doesn’t happen.

I have so appreciated your time. I am going to, God willing, in the next week get this paper wrapped up. What I’m going to do is email it to you. If you see any gross misstatements please forgive me, correct it, change it around. What I want to try and do is present a fair and accurate case study of how Willow hires. It’s nor a pro or con. It’s just this is the way I understand what they do. There may be some questions I’ve interjected. You know, how do they do this; how do they do that? They are only meant to stimulate people’s thinking. So with that, it’s due on October 15th. I want you to take a look at it. It may not impact the one I turn in, but I’m going to present it in February at a conference and I definitely want your blessing, your okay on what I send you to say this is the truth and we’re good with it. I’m really trying to be very aboveboard and say they’ve asked me to present this at a conference. I’d love to do that, but I want you to look at it and say “please correct this and this and this because these are wrong.” Just help me with it.

Rob: I’m glad to help any way I can.
APPENDIX I

WILLOW CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH
HIRING DOCUMENT
# APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT
Willow Creek Community Church  
67 East Algonquin Road • South Barrington, IL 60010  
Attention: Human Resources

Position Desired:  
☑ Full-Time  ☐ Part-Time (Hours desired per week)  

**PERSONAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Social Security No.: - -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>City: State ZIP CODE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Phone ( ) - Work Phone ( ) - email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have you ever been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If yes, explain in writing: 

---

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SCHOOL</th>
<th>NAME/LOCATION</th>
<th>YEARS COMPLETED</th>
<th>HONORS RECEIVED: DIPLOMA/DEGREE</th>
<th>COURSE OF STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jr. High/High School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade, Business, or Technical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

## EMPLOYMENT

*Do not substitute a resume for this section.*

Present Employer:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone Number ( ) -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position(s) held</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment dates:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting</th>
<th>Ending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting Pay $</td>
<td>Ending Pay $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor/Manager</td>
<td>May We Contact ☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reason for Leaving: 

Description of Primary Responsibilities: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past Employer</th>
<th>Phone Number ( ) -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>City State ZIP CODE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position(s) held</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment dates:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting</th>
<th>Ending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting Pay $</td>
<td>Ending Pay $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor/Manager</td>
<td>May We Contact ☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reason for Leaving: 

Description of Primary Responsibilities: 

---

---
REFERENCES

We prefer that one reference be a Willow Creek Community Church staff person or lay leader.
First Reference
Length of Time Known
Relationship to you
Second Reference
Length of Time Known
Relationship to you

CHRISTIAN BACKGROUND

Are you a born-again Christian? □ Yes □ No If yes, since when: Month Year
If yes, briefly describe below how you came to Christ as your personal Savior.

Do you regularly attend our Weekend services? □ Yes □ No If yes, since when: Month Year
Do you regularly attend New Community? □ Yes □ No If yes, since when: Month Year
Are you a member of Willow Creek? □ Yes □ No If yes, name of your small group leader
If you attend another church, which one?
In what areas of the church ministry are you presently involved?

In what areas of church ministry are you currently serving?
If there is any additional information of which you feel the church should be aware, please explain below.

AGREEMENT

The undersigned applicant hereby certifies that the information contained on this Application for Employment is true and correct, and I have not omitted any facts, which I reasonably believe would reflect unfavorably on the Church's decision to hire me. In addition, I hereby authorize the Church to contact any person or institution I have listed on this Application for Employment (unless indicated otherwise) and to independently verify the correctness of the information I have provided.

Employment with the Church is for no definite period. Employment may be terminated by either the employee or the employer, at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause.

Full Name □ Yes, I have read and agree with the statement above. Date
APPENDIX K

WILLOW CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH
RIGHT FIT EVALUATION SHEET
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Biblical Principles and Best Marketplace Practices</strong></th>
<th>Fellowship</th>
<th>Willow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) THE HIRING CONVICTION</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Engage in persistent prayer (e.g. for discernment)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Exercise diligent patience to “get it right”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) By using policies and procedures to minimize impulsiveness and maximize objectivity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) By requiring supervisors to take full ownership for hiring their direct reports</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) By leaving a role open rather than fill it with “almost”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) THE HIRING TARGET</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to define a new team member’s role and minimum degree of fit using outcomes and the 4 C criteria of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility (e.g. a success profile).</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Define the hiring “target” in terms of outcomes and the 4 C’s criteria</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Define the minimum acceptable thresholds for each outcome and criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) THE CANDIDATES</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to seriously consider only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required thresholds of fit.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Consider traditional and non-traditional candidates</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Use personal and professional networks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Use referrals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Use an Opportunity Profile to surface passive candidates, if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) THE MATCHING PROCESS</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Use the structured, behavior-based style interviewing format as a data-gathering tool rather than a decision-making tool</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Conduct no less than three of these kinds of interviews, with at least two being face-to-face</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Complete all reference checks, ideally as additional interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) Complete all candidate interviews before recommending the final “right fit” match for the team</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 – Comparing Willow’s Hiring Process with the Right Fit Pattern
APPENDIX L

SUMMARY OF ACTUAL VERSUS PREDICTED RESULTS
## Biblical Principles and Best Marketplace Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1=“met;” 2=“met in spirit;” 3 =“not met”)</th>
<th>Fellowship</th>
<th>Willow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(1) THE HIRING CONVICTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to hire new team members for role and fit under the Spirit’s constant direction.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Engage in persistent prayer (e.g. for discernment)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Exercise diligent patience to “get it right”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) By using policies and procedures to minimize impulsiveness and maximize objectivity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) By requiring supervisors to take full ownership for hiring their direct reports</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) By leaving a role open rather than fill it with “almost”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(2) THE HIRING TARGET</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to define a new team member’s role and minimum degree of fit using outcomes and the 4 C criteria of Character, Calling, Competence and Compatibility (e.g. a success profile).</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Define the hiring “target” in terms of outcomes and the 4 C’s criteria</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Define the minimum acceptable thresholds for each outcome and criteria</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(3) THE CANDIDATES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to seriously consider only candidates who meet or exceed the minimum required thresholds of fit.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Consider traditional and non-traditional candidates</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Use personal and professional networks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Use referrals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Use an Opportunity Profile to surface passive candidates, if needed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(4) THE MATCHING PROCESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve to interview relationally, objectively and thoroughly before declaring a match for the team.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Use the structured, behavior-based style interviewing format as a data-gathering tool rather than a decision-making tool</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Conduct no less than three of these kinds of interviews, with at least two being face-to-face</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Complete all reference checks, ideally as additional interviews</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) Complete all candidate interviews before recommending the final “right fit” match for the team</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 – Summary of Actual Versus Predicted Results
Dear Name,

Thank you so much for your interest in the [Position Title] at [Church]. I enjoyed visiting with you by phone a couple of weeks ago and was blessed by the level of open and honest communication we had. It was a privilege getting to know you a little better.

As you know, many variables enter into making a tough decision such as this. A lot of those variables that come into play have nothing to do with the candidate and everything to do with our particular church — with our needs and our weaknesses. We have prayed that God would direct through this process in finding the best fit between our applicant’s qualifications and the church’s needs.

I am well aware that you have placed an enormous trust in us to be good stewards of what God has entrusted into our mutual care. So after much prayer and consideration, I do not believe this would be a good fit and have decided to pursue other candidates.

I deeply appreciate the sacrifice and time you have invested to pray and consider this ministry and am humbled by the process. In closing this particular door, I trust that God will continue to direct you to the place He has for you. Be assured that you are in our prayers as you continue to pursue God’s best. May God continue to richly bless you in the future.

Sincerely,

[Staff Member Name]
[Staff Member Title]
BIBLIOGRAPHY


