



HR & MANAGING EMPLOYEES

CHURCH PRACTICES SERIES

APRIL 2023



WELCOME

Over the last few years serving as GTA Regional Director in the Western Ontario District, it became clear that there were some common challenges facing church leaders in the Greater Toronto Area.

As a result, we decided to develop The Church Practices Series to assist our leaders in addressing these challenges in their unique context.

In the following few pages, you will find links to interviews with those with an academic perspective on these challenges and those who have personally worked to address them. In addition, you will find links to resources and a curated summary of what we have seen in our research.

We hope this package helps spark conversation as we work together to see our region impacted for God.

Joel Spiridigliozzi with Jonathan Gallo



GTA Region



MANAGING EMPLOYEES

No matter the size of your church, you must understand the legal requirements and practical elements of attracting, hiring, managing, and celebrating employees. Here are a few considerations to keep in mind.

RECRUITMENT

Develop targeted recruitment strategies that attract qualified, mission-driven candidates. For example, network development can help you find ministry candidates through word of mouth. Other options include posting on job boards such as wodistrict.org, christiancareerscanada.com, christianjobs.ca, glassdoor.ca, and indeed.ca. For recruitment of senior roles, some churches rely on recruiters such as Nelsonandkraft.com, vanderbloemen.com, or slingshotgroup.org.

Pastors should also consider hiring from within the congregation where skills and talents align with existing needs. The church budget may not allow for a full-time position, but hiring someone part-time that is already connected ensures focused attention of a ministry. For example, a member with a teaching background might consider leading a children's ministry, or a social services background might consider leading a youth ministry.

If you find it challenging to recruit new hires, several issues might be at play. Qualified candidates consider many factors before serving in a church environment.

- **Pay Rate & Benefits:** Living costs have made it increasingly challenging for individuals to work full-time in an urban centre.
- **Clarity:** Experienced workers are used to working in environments with clear job descriptions, policies, and procedures.
- **Reputation: Church leaders build reputations as employers to work for or stay away from over time.** Behavior, mindset, expectations, experience, and past employees can significantly impact a candidate's willingness to work with you.

SELECTION PROCESS

Building an unbiased, transparent selection process is essential to identify candidates with the right skills, experience, and fit. Don't yield to the temptation of simply picking someone because they are known, related, or need a job, and it would save you the time to look for a qualified candidate. Sometimes the right candidate is in front of you, but time has a way of clarifying exceptional candidates who can work with you for the long term. Here is a sample process you can take.

- Write a role description and advertisement.
- Advertise on your chosen platforms.
- Interview the top three candidates.
- Perform a second interview within a week of all interviews being completed.
- Keep interviewing if the right candidate has not been found.
- Present a candidate with a written offer. They have a few days to sign back to accept.
- Turn down candidates only after a candidate has accepted a role.

ONBOARDING AND ORIENTATION

Create a structured onboarding process to help new employees understand their roles and the organization's culture, mission, and values. For example, every church has its culture, history, influential families, policies, and procedures. Providing as much written documentation and time with new employees will increase the assimilation process. Some administrators create a checklist of items new employees must complete to ensure a smooth orientation. This might include:

- **Accounting:** payroll and payroll process.'
- **Building:** alarm, keys, installation orientation, open/lockdown process', trash location, who oversees what area of the building.
- **Technology:** computer setup, email, a church software
- **Schedule:** quarterly calendar of significant events, room bookings, departmental events, church-wide training days, annual church rhythm, etc.
- **Sundays:** how services are planned, announcements are made, and each staff member's role on Sunday.
- **Departmental Training:** leadership expectations for running the department, events, and volunteers.
- **Meetings:** board, volunteer teams, key individuals

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Offer ongoing training opportunities to enhance employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities. Encourage and support continuous learning and development, including attending relevant workshops, conferences, and seminars. For example, the WOD has several leadership training workshops and is connected to Bible colleges and seminaries. In addition, key department leaders can connect with others in the WOD network to connect and learn from others. Developing a written plan each year on the environments your staff member will engage in is critical to helping them grow.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Establish clear performance expectations and regularly assess employee performance against these expectations. Provide constructive feedback and guidance to help employees improve their performance and achieve their goals. Foster a culture of continuous improvement and recognition of achievements.

For example, managers holding monthly connection points with their direct reports provide an appropriate space for what an employee did well, could work on for next time, and create specific goals. In addition, these feedback sessions can be tracked for progress or ongoing trends that need to be reversed. Similarly, an employee can use this space to discuss their challenges, where they need additional support, and to bring up workplace issues.

Annual role reviews are a great time to provide overall feedback using the history of these periodic reviews, adjust role descriptions, communicate pay or benefit increases, and set goals for the upcoming year.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Develop competitive and fair compensation packages, considering industry standards and the organization's budget. This starts by understanding salary ranges for classifications of employees. You can use services from cccc.org/compensation_survey and payscale.com to determine what people in similar roles are being paid in your area. All PAOC church staff are eligible to become part of the [PAOC Pension Plan](#) and obtain [WOD Health Benefits](#) through our partners. It is essential to regularly review and adjust compensation and benefits to remain competitive and retain talent.

Creating a pay grid helps compensate employees fairly if you have a large staff. Pay grids can be developed using education, experience, responsibility level, and tenure. An HR specialist can create a pay grid unique to your organization. As roles are evaluated yearly, salary increases can consider the cost of living and these factors.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

It takes considerable effort to create a healthy work environment that balances seasons of hard work and rest, space for getting things done and space for reflection, collaborative conversations, and directive conversations, managers that both support and challenge employees, a high level of care and accountability, and moments of fun and moments of focus.

In non-profits, employees must buy into the organization's mission and vision. In churches, theological differences, ministry approaches, and personality conflicts can affect employee engagement.

Staff days where teams learn together, talk through these challenges, and have some fun (during work hours) provide the relational and leadership equity needed during tough seasons.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Stay updated on applicable local, provincial, and federal labour laws, and ensure compliance in all HR practices. Implement policies and procedures to minimize legal and reputational risks, such as addressing harassment, discrimination, health & safety, and conflicts of interest. Train employees and management on relevant legal and ethical issues.

Building a staff handbook is an excellent way to start this process for your church. A staff handbook should include a mission, vision, values, statement of faith, hiring policies, vacation and time off policies, compensation, discipline, dispute resolution, etc. A staff handbook also creates accountability for you as a leader.

Have a story or experience that you would like to share? Section meetings are a perfect place to debrief. We would also love to hear from you and help pass on what you have learned.

