

Helping missionaries find the right fit for ministry

For most missionaries, ministry is much more than a job—it is a calling. Ideally, missionaries would want ministry to be marked by joy, harmony and fruitfulness. Yet, we all know that ministry can sometimes be frustrating, difficult, or discouraging. As a supervisor, putting the right person in the right role or ministry function can make a big difference in the missionary's "fit". If a supervisor can help a missionary find the missionary's "sweet spot" the missionary will be much happier and the ministry will benefit.

Good ministry fit is found at the convergence of three questions or issues:

- What is the missionary good at?
- What does the missionary enjoy?
- What does the ministry (or organization) need?



It is quite rare that missionaries (or anyone else) are able to spend all of their time in areas of giftedness or doing things that they enjoy. We all have to do things that we may not be particularly good at or that are not enjoyable. However if someone is able to spend 10%, 20% or even 50% of their time at the intersection of their giftedness, enjoyable tasks and ministry needs, it will energize and encourage them greatly and benefit the ministry and organizational goals.

Here are some questions or discussion topics you could use to help identify a missionary's "sweet spot".

Giftedness and Skills

Has the missionary taken a spiritual gift inventory? If so, how might their spiritual gifts fit best into our ministry needs?

Ask the missionary to describe a time when they felt that they were really able to make a difference and were using their gifts to a great extent (either on the field or prior to serving overseas). What was going on? How were they contributing?

Is there an area that the missionary would like to develop new skills or abilities? What things could the missionary do in the coming year to develop these areas.

As a supervisor, describe a time when the missionary seemed to really shine or excel at what he or she was doing.

Enjoyment

In the past year, have the missionary describe a time when they were involved in ministry and you felt that all of the hard work was worth it.

Have the missionary describe a time when they were engrossed in their work or ministry and found themselves so engaged that they lost track of time.

Ministry Needs

If your team has a set of clear goals or ministry responsibilities, review all of the tasks that you are involved in on a regular basis and identify the most important or urgent ministry needs. Ask the missionary if he/she feels that his or her gifts or interests might apply to these needs.

Does the missionary see new ministry opportunities which might help the team advance? Do these ideas help move the team toward their overarching goals?

As a supervisor, do you see any areas of giftedness which might be well used to move the ministry forward?