

6 Ways Good Pastors Make Bad Hiring Decisions

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We all know the feeling. You hired a rockstar leader with a proven record of ministry growth. This was the kind of person you could really build a church on. Then somewhere along the way, things took a bad turn. Today, as performance is low and tensions are high, you're wondering if you made the right choice.



It's hard to be 100% sure every time you make a job offer. But you can take intentional steps to avoid some common mistakes. Consider these 6 ways churches make hires they regret:

1. Hiring for where you *are* rather than where you are *going*.

Too often, churches develop new positions for their current state, not their future strategy. Doing so only makes change and progress more challenging. This is why [The Unstuck Group's](#) process involves Strategic Planning before the Staffing & Structure Review. You have to know where you are headed tomorrow in order to build the right team today.

2. Searching for perfection rather than potential.

When a church lacks a leadership development strategy, its natural bent is to look for leaders who have already "arrived." Many pastors would rather make a handoff than guide a new leader for a season. Instead of perfection, try looking for someone with the potential to grow. I've hired people with less experience because I knew they could be the leaders we needed within 6-12 months. A great benefit is that these leaders with potential are typically more adaptable to your culture.

3. Looking for the hire to tell you what your strategy should be.

When you feel a lack of expertise in a ministry area (i.e. students, creative arts, small groups), it is natural to look for a new hire to set the strategy for it. While a new leader should be given space to develop plans, you need to have an overarching idea of where you want to go. Their strategy must align with the overall strategy of the church. Otherwise, you'll end up with ministry silos and disunity.

4. Hiring people just like you.

It is natural to build a team full of people like you. After all, you can quickly understand each other and form a tight bond. Yet these similarities can also lead to groupthink and an unbalanced team. The body of Christ needs multiple parts with differing personalities to be healthy. We like to use proven [personality profiles](#) to help churches see where they have strengths and personality gaps to fill on the team.

5. Not involving the right people in the hiring process.

Leaders often see value in 360-degree feedback reviews. Yet many churches fail to utilize the same practice in their hiring process. You need the perspectives of everyone surrounding the position

you are hiring for. Each person has a unique view of what is required of the role. Before finalizing your decision, give people from all sides the chance to sit in on an interview.

6. Not preparing other staff for the hire.

One of the worst things you can do is surprise your staff with a new hire. Each position affects others on the team. When you add someone else, people naturally ask, “How will this affect me?” If you fail to answer that clearly ahead of time, many will fill the space with apprehension about your new hire. That’s a quick way to ruin team culture.

Wondering if you’re taking the right steps to hire the leaders you need? Thinking your vision might require a new leadership structure? Learn how a [Staffing & Structure Review](#) could answer your questions.