

# THE 8 STRATEGIC HIRES

That Will Grow Your Church



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# ABOUT THIS EBOOK

If you're looking for resources on church growth, you won't be disappointed. There is no end to the fantastic resources available to help growing churches succeed. But advice on staffing your church for growth is sorely lacking.

We wanted to close that gap. In this strategic guide, you'll find some positions that will help spur and facilitate church growth. We have placed them in a suggested order to hire as you go.

Adding to your church staff is a critical decision and requires strategic thinking. In fact, it might include some of the most important decisions your church will make. We hope this ebook will help you organize your dream team!

## *About echurch*

Pushpay and echurch were created in response to well-documented declines in both tithing and church attendance. By simply making giving available on your congregation's smartphones (connected in real time to a church's website and database), we help pastors address the disconnect between the church and younger, tech-savvy generations.

Engagement is the key to community. In our fast-paced culture, mobile technology is essential to staying connected with people in your church. When you are accessible from their pocket, you open up communication with your members and allow them to give you a gift or connect with you anytime. Mobile adoption is the secret to engagement, and we have the tools to ensure your success.

If you're interested in learning more about how you can keep your church engaged and giving, visit [echurchgiving.com](http://echurchgiving.com).

## *About Jayson D. Bradley*

Jayson D. Bradley is a well-known writer and pastor in Bellingham, WA. He's a regular contributor to the [echurch blog](#) and Relevant Magazine. His own blog, [JaysonDBradley.com](http://JaysonDBradley.com), has been voted one of the 25 Christian blogs you should be reading.

## *Introduction*

When it comes to running a church, it's easy to make decisions haphazardly. Many churches set up a system that works well enough, maintaining that system until they reach a pressure point that demands a change in policy or procedure. This makes complete sense.

One of the most important things you can do to stimulate growth is to get out of the stimulus–response rut. Once you develop a culture that thinks about change as something you do to facilitate future growth—and not something you put off until it's just too uncomfortable maintaining the status quo—you can start seeing a change in momentum.

This kind of inspired change requires a great deal of faith because it's adapting to opportunities that have yet to materialize. Growth requires effort that's proactive and often feels counterintuitive to the present state of affairs.

This is also true when it comes to staffing decisions.

## *Where do you start?*

I'm assuming that you're starting with a lead pastor, a full or part-time administrator, and a music director. Depending on the pastor's strengths, you might require less involvement from someone to handle all the administrative details or even juggle the musical details. Ideally, you want to allow the lead pastor to focus on the specifics of the position: teaching, ministering, and leading.

We've listed eight strategic hires a growth-oriented church needs to make. These positions can (and probably should) be paid, but it's completely understandable if they need to start as a volunteer positions. They're listed here in their recommended order of hire, and they fall into three general phases: building attendance, building ministries, and scaling for future growth.



## HIRING PHASE 1: BUILDING ATTENDANCE

***Whenever you talk about church growth or finances, there are always voices who respond with hostility. In their mind, having a strategy to grow or to increase the percentage of people who donate regularly to the church is unspiritual. But the truth is, it's what you do with your growth that matters.***

Your church may have the world's most effective disciple-making program, but if there's no one there, it doesn't matter. The percentage of people in any church that is being transformed into disciples is smaller than the number of attendees. But if you have an intentional and strategic program in place to create disciples, the more people you can get to attend your church, the greater the percentage of people involved in the discipleship process.

It's the same thing with finances. It takes a certain amount of money to keep your facilities open and pay whatever staff you have. The more people give, the more resources you have to pour into new opportunities and ministries.

Growth is a flywheel game. It takes a certain amount of energy, resources, and growth to build momentum for more energy, resources, and growth. And though it might seem daunting to get that flywheel moving, once you do, the growth begins to happen instinctively.

# DON'T WAIT FOR PEOPLE TO COME TO YOU

***There might have been a time when a church opened its doors and people just showed up, but that's changing. According to a [Hartford Institute of Religion Research](#) study, even though 40 percent of the U.S. population say they attend church regularly, less than 20 percent actually do.***

It's not wise to invest all of your resources into upgrading the facilities and staffing ministries to appeal to people who may never walk in the door. It's important to think of staff and volunteer positions that can help increase awareness of your church while building relationships and trust within the community.

For instance, a lot of churches might think that their lack of a thriving youth ministry is holding them back from growing. There's an anxiety that visiting families will show up and not return if there aren't adequate ministries for their kids. And even though there's only a small handful of teenagers in the church, resources are poured into growing this ministry. But if you don't have focused and strategic outreach, you're not really making any gains. You're still struggling to catch more of the organic traffic.

Instead of pouring their time and resources into creating ministries before they need to, what if those churches partnered with other churches that lacked established youth ministries and created ministry opportunities there? Or what if their teens attended the flourishing youth ministries of another local church while they focused on what they did best? These churches' unspoken fear is that they would miss out on potential growth by not having the youth ministry tied to their church. If the teens attended another youth group, their families might start attending that church instead—or visiting families might have decided to attend the church with the thriving youth ministry. This is a legitimate concern, but it arises out of the idea that ministries are more about growing the church and less about growing the people who attend them.

In truth, I've seen more people choose not to attend or to leave a church because of poorly facilitated or attended ministries than because of nonexistent ministries.

But what if that energy was poured into building relationships and interest in the community? What if you were to bring people to your church based on their understanding of and interest in your mission and vision, rather than because they're looking for a place that meets all of their expectations?



## **POSITION #1:** COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR

*The community ambassador plays the important role of building relationships and establishing trust in the community. If the job is being done correctly, this person isn't in the office too often. Instead, the ambassador is out in your town meeting people, getting involved in community life, and looking for opportunities for the church to serve.*

### ***Job description:***

The community ambassador's job is to become familiar with the church's surrounding community, creating a strategy to build goodwill, strong relationships, and ministry opportunities.

This could include but is not limited to building relationships with:

- ▶ The city council
- ▶ Law enforcement and emergency services
- ▶ Schools
- ▶ Retailers
- ▶ Charities
- ▶ Other churches
- ▶ The Chamber of Commerce

This staff member is also responsible for mobilizing the church to meet significant and felt needs in the community. Through organizing volunteers for outreach and service events, the community ambassador builds trust with local residents.

The question that should be driving every ambassador is, “What can we be doing in the community to make people thankful that we’re here?”

### ***Ideal candidate:***

To really shine, this position requires a very special personality. You want someone who’s personable, friendly, charismatic, and warm, but you also want someone who is organized and has a real eye for details. Ambassadors should be extroverts who are able to discover potential opportunities in conversations and are comfortable making requests of people they’ve recently met. They also need to be able to organize people and details to pull off events, gatherings, and service projects.

Look for people who:

- ▶ Aren’t shy
- ▶ Make you feel comfortable
- ▶ Don’t need a lot of supervision
- ▶ Are focused and driven
- ▶ Have work history that includes coordinating people and events





## POSITION #2: COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

***Just as the title suggests, this person is in charge of your communication both inside and outside the church.***

### ***Job description:***

In an ideal situation, all of your communication is coordinated through a specific individual who has a vision for why, what and how the church should communicate. Tasks include:

- ▶ Optimizing website communication
- ▶ Keeping website events and information up to date.
- ▶ Governing all church communication, both print and digital
- ▶ Developing and facilitating a strategy for social media channels
- ▶ Creating and constantly fine-tuning a process to collect visitor information
- ▶ Overseeing church platforms like a blog, podcast, and/or [church app](#)\*
- ▶ Managing the use or creation of design assets

The communications director doesn't need to do the actual work; he or she just needs to be responsible for making sure that it all fits the church's message and brand. The communications director is leading and managing assistants and volunteers who will implement the church's communication vision. For instance, this person doesn't have to have design experience. But a director needs to be able to adequately lead someone who does—and recognize inadequate design! I know it can seem strange referring to your church as a brand, but essentially, this is an important element of how to look at your ministry in order to make it inviting to new people.

One of this position's biggest responsibilities is ensuring that people who discover the church's website, social media, or other digital platforms have a positive experience and leave with an understanding of the church's culture and vision. These are the core principles that any great brand is built upon and thus are important ones to keep at the center of your ministry.

It's important to remember that your church has entertained many visitors that you've never seen. These people go to your website or visit your Facebook page to get a sense of your culture before they ever decide to visit your actual church. The communications director is responsible for ensuring that they're experiencing the best representation of your church.

### ***Ideal candidate:***

The ideal communications director candidate has a marketing background. Most of the communications this position will be responsible for are intended to encourage specific responses, whether it's signing up for a potluck or increasing giving to meet a budgetary shortfall. A strong candidate has learned how to communicate information in a way that prioritizes the benefits to the reader.

Look for people who:

- ▶ Are articulate and have excellent written communication skills
- ▶ Have proven leadership experience
- ▶ Are comfortable making decisions
- ▶ Have exacting attention to detail
- ▶ Possess a background in marketing
- ▶ Have an understanding of good and bad design
- ▶ Can give you thoughtful and important feedback about how you can optimize your website and social media accounts

### *\*Managing your church app*

By 2020, [it is projected](#) that there will be 5.5 billion mobile users—that's about 70 percent of the world's population! Mobile church apps are already overtaking websites as the preferred way people engage, consume church content, and make donations.

The communications director will oversee the content in your church app—keeping it up to date, ensuring that church calendars have the latest information, and making sure that its features are optimized to keep the church focused and growing together.

Church apps like echurch's [Total Engagement Package](#) help churches manage their sermon media, organize and manage events, share podcasts and blogs, communicate important information through push notifications, and facilitate giving.

As mobile computing becomes a bigger part of our day-to-day lives, this will be an important responsibility for the communications director.



## **HIRING PHASE 2:** BUILDING YOUR MINISTRIES

*Now that you have a couple people who are working on reaching out to the community through relationship building and online messaging, it's time to start building out your ministries. Obviously, you want ministries in the church that will help in the discipleship process, but you also want a format in place to turn attendees into volunteers.*

*You don't want to have people attending for too long without having a way that they can get involved.*



## **POSITION #3:** CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR

***Now that you have positions in place to generate interest and traffic, you're ready to start building out ministries designed to serve the people visiting your church. Building a strong kid's ministry is the perfect place to start. It takes more work and volunteers to get it off the ground, but having a thriving children's ministry helps get kids excited about attending—and they almost always bring their parents!***

This position oversees all the children's ministries up through high school. It requires a person with a large workload capacity and high energy levels. The director is going to be responsible for a lot of details, so he or she needs to be empowered to make autonomous decisions.

### ***Job description:***

The children's ministry director is responsible for creating an effective, fun, and safe environment for teaching and equipping children. This includes:

- ▶ Coordinating and overseeing all areas of children's ministry
- ▶ Creating a foolproof system for getting children to and from class
- ▶ Ensuring background checks are done on all adult helpers and volunteers
- ▶ Choosing curriculum that reflects the church's values and theology
- ▶ Equipping volunteers to lead as effectively as possible
- ▶ Fostering a culture where children look forward to attending and are building valuable memories
- ▶ Casting a vision for the children's ministry and keeping it before the church
- ▶ Developing, submitting, and monitoring the children's ministry budget
- ▶ Recruiting volunteers and helpers
- ▶ Meeting regularly with volunteers to work out any issues and ensure their satisfaction

### ***Ideal candidate:***

You want a children's ministry director who has the capacity to juggle lots of responsibilities and the ability to prioritize them effectively. This person will have a good attention to detail and a soft, nurturing relationship with children.

Specific considerations include:

- ▶ An unblemished criminal history (especially with children)
- ▶ An understanding of biblical theology
- ▶ The ability to teach, especially if asked unexpected questions
- ▶ A number of strong personal references
- ▶ A respect for confidentiality
- ▶ A proven ability to lead others
- ▶ A strong work ethic and ability to make difficult decisions



## POSITION #4: YOUTH DIRECTOR

***Next, you'll want to bring in a youth director to help you start assembling your ministry to teens. This is going to be an important element in retaining the visiting families and helping kids transition into worshipping adults.***

The youth director oversees the spiritual development for both junior- and senior-high students. This is one of the most important jobs in the church—and one of the most perilous. As teens start to grow in autonomy and discover who they are, they need someone they can trust to help them navigate their doubts, fears, and insecurities with Christ through this difficult season.

Because of the relationships built between church youth workers and teens, there has been a pandemic of churches that have had to deal with the fallout of inappropriate relationships. It is of utmost importance that the person who fills this position (and any other volunteer positions working with teens) be chosen carefully.

### ***Job description:***

The number one goal of a youth director is to oversee the spiritual development of teens. The person in this role will be responsible for creating a fun, inviting, and dynamic environment for kids to build relationships with each other and with Christ.

These responsibilities would include:

- ▶ Arranging a variety of activities: Bible studies, lock-ins, mission trips, camps, retreats, fundraisers, etc.
- ▶ Overseeing the recruitment, training, and background checking of adult volunteers
- ▶ Creating, submitting, and adhering to a youth department budget
- ▶ Maintaining and communicating a vision for the youth program
- ▶ Staying abreast of curriculums and studies to ensure that volunteers always have the best resources for working with teens
- ▶ Fostering relationships with parents that are mindful of appropriate confidentiality
- ▶ Meeting regularly with volunteers to work out any difficulties and ensure their happiness
- ▶ Creating a culture where teens feel comfortable inviting their friends

### ***Ideal candidate:***

When it comes to filling youth positions, many churches fall into the trap of hiring too quickly. While you can't mitigate all risks when hiring, you need to be careful to do your due diligence in hiring youth workers. Background, previous work history, and personal reference checks are non-negotiable.

By the time you make the decision to hire someone, you want to feel confident that you've hired the best possible candidate.

Qualities you want to consider for a youth director include:

- ▶ A demonstrable enthusiasm for youth ministry
- ▶ A degree in theology, Christian education, or youth ministry, or equivalent ministry experience
- ▶ The ability to promote and raise funds for events
- ▶ A capacity to communicate clearly to children and adults through a variety of platforms
- ▶ Obvious leadership qualities
- ▶ The ability to create a rapport with administrative and pastoral staff, volunteers, and teens
- ▶ Strong organizational skills and follow-through
- ▶ The ability to work unsupervised
- ▶ A strong vision for a growing youth ministry
- ▶ Exceptional communication skills





## POSITION #5: DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR

***Every church needs to have a plan for turning adults into disciples. This position will round out the important ministries in your church by building a plan for discipling mature adults.***

This individual is responsible for the creation and oversight of an adult discipleship program. The format is up to the church to create, but it could include elements like:

- ▶ Sunday school classes
- ▶ Home groups
- ▶ Prayer groups
- ▶ Mentorship programs
- ▶ And more

Ultimately, the desire is for the church to have a cohesive plan for turning attendees into mature disciples who are able to disciple others. The discipleship director works with the church leadership team to define and facilitate that process.

A position like this is often outside the purview of many churches that already have Sunday services and any number of loosely related ministries and groups.

But since a church's one job is to make disciples, it's helpful to actually decide on a process for that to occur.

This doesn't have to be a static process. In fact, if it is, it won't work correctly. It's going to take some trial and error to figure out the best discipleship method.

### ***Job description:***

The discipleship director's first responsibility requires working with the leadership team to create an acceptable process for discipleship. Other responsibilities include:

- ▶ Creating a process to get attendees into the discipleship program
- ▶ Building a rubric that maps out discipleship landmarks
- ▶ Fashioning a timeline for the discipleship process
- ▶ Ensuring there is training and opportunity for people to disciple and mentor others
- ▶ Constructing a process for evaluating and fine-tuning the discipleship program

Next, the discipleship director puts the ministry into motion and makes sure it is running efficiently. He or she will communicate the vision of the program to the church regularly and create a process for attendees and new members to get started.

### ***Ideal candidate:***

The candidate should be a person with leadership skills and vision. You're going to count on the discipleship director to create a working program out of nothing, so you'll be relying on this individual's ingenuity and initiative.

The person in this role should be easy to get along with and equally comfortable working with leaders and volunteers.

Other elements you might want to look for include:

- ▶ A four-year degree in an applicable discipline or equivalent ministry experience
- ▶ An aptitude for organization
- ▶ A wide knowledge of curriculums and discipleship practices
- ▶ The ability to make quick decisions
- ▶ Strong communication skills
- ▶ The capacity to equip and prepare others for the work of ministry



## **HIRING PHASE 3:** SCALING FOR MORE GROWTH

*As you continue to grow, you'll discover opportunities for important new positions. Once you reach a comfortable size and have strategic ministries in place, it's time to consider filling certain positions to scale for more growth.*



## POSITION #6: HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR

***You want a staff member whose sole job is to make sure visitors feel welcomed and loved, and attendees feel cared for and important—that position is the hospitality coordinator.***

This person is your onboarding specialist, responsible for creating and leading a team that ensures that visitors feel welcomed and loved. The hospitality coordinator is also responsible for making sure that visitors understand the opportunities they have to volunteer and serve.

But the job of a hospitality coordinator doesn't end there. It also includes the responsibility of creating a system where the congregation can have needs met like:

- ▶ Visitations
- ▶ Scheduled meals for important life events
- ▶ Benevolence needs
- ▶ Etc.

### ***Job description:***

The hospitality coordinator's primary job is training others, delegating, and ensuring that jobs are being completed. This requires a fairly large job description that includes:

- ▶ Overseeing the hospitality ministry for visitors including:
  - Greeters
  - Working with the communications director on communication materials for visitors
  - Clearly communicating the nursery process
  - After-church receptions or meet-the-pastor gatherings
  - Creating and running a parking lot team
- ▶ Helping visitors find ways to connect
- ▶ Facilitating any visitation programs
- ▶ Coordinating ministry events requiring food; this includes developing a reasonable awareness for how much food is required for various kinds of events
- ▶ Organizing all areas of member care
- ▶ Scheduling and overseeing the use of facilities for outside events
- ▶ Recruiting and managing volunteers

As you can see, the requirements for a hospitality coordinator are vast. The person in this role needs to be given plenty of authority to delegate and needs to be comfortable doing so.

### ***Ideal candidate:***

There's no question that the hospitality coordinators needs to be hospitable! But they also need to command respect and be self-assured. With this many spinning plates, they need to be given the leeway to run the area as they see fit. This doesn't mean that you want a personality that overshadows others or isn't a team player; it simply means that this individual can't be a pushover or afraid to ask others for what's needed.

- ▶ A hospitality coordinator will also need to have:
  - ▶ An unbelievable capacity for organization
  - ▶ Strong attention to detail
  - ▶ The ability to delegate and lead
  - ▶ An outgoing personality
  - ▶ A desire to turn chaos into order



## **POSITION #7:** FACILITIES MANAGER

*You want a building and grounds that make people feel comfortable. The facilities manager is responsible for making sure that everything is working as it should and running smoothly. This person will likely supervise a team of volunteers or part-time employees and will need to be responsible for knowing when to do something themselves, delegate it to a volunteer, or hire an outside contractor to help.*

### ***Job description:***

The facilities manager should be handy in a number of areas. This includes the preventive maintenance of facility equipment like HVAC or simple plumbing. The person in this position will also need to have an understanding of what certain kinds of repairs cost to ensure that hiring outside vendors is done in a way that's the most cost effective. On top of these skills, the facilities manager's responsibilities will also include:

- ▶ Prioritizing and completing church building maintenance and repairs
- ▶ Overseeing facility changes required for certain events
- ▶ Reviewing all outside vendor invoices to verify completion
- ▶ Organizing all maintenance records for the building and appropriate equipment
- ▶ Creating and maintaining a seasonal or annual maintenance checklist
- ▶ Organizing volunteers for janitorial duties and grounds maintenance
- ▶ Creating and maintaining a supply list
- ▶ Ensuring the regular maintenance of grounds and sanitation equipment

### ***Ideal candidate:***

When it comes to taking care of your grounds and building, the ideal candidate is going to have basic knowledge of caring for a large, non-residential building, including:

- ▶ Basic carpentry and mechanical skills
- ▶ Strong organizational skills
- ▶ The ability to lead employees and volunteers
- ▶ The ability to negotiate with contractors and vendors
- ▶ The capacity to be available and on call for emergency situations



## **POSITION #8:** EXECUTIVE PASTOR

*One of the most important hires a growing church can make is an executive pastor. This person is responsible for the pastoral leadership and management of the staff, as well as all areas related to the church's mission. This places the executive pastor over all the other ministries represented here. If you've filled all the other positions listed, you'll want to hire an executive pastor before hiring anyone else. Your lead pastor will depend on this person to manage your church staff as you grow, so the lead pastor can focus on teaching and leading your church.*



### ***Job description:***

The executive pastor is a steward of the senior pastor's vision and the church's resources. It's a challenging position that requires big-picture, visionary thinking and attention to a number of important details. Above all, the executive pastor needs to be a spiritual leader who serves the staff and congregation.

Job functions include:

- ▶ Defining and promoting goal-centered ministry
- ▶ Creating and communicating expectations for ministry positions
- ▶ Motivating and aligning staff toward the church's vision
- ▶ Coaching ministry leaders
- ▶ Facilitating the budget process
- ▶ Ensuring the church meets its financial objectives
- ▶ Supervising church communications
- ▶ Overseeing staff development and planning staff meetings

### ***Ideal Candidate:***

The more experience an executive has the better. It would be ideal if this person had spent time working in areas of ministry including children, youth, missions, education, and more. The wider the candidate's experience, the better he or she will be able to empathize and understand the demands upon other ministry leaders.

Executive pastors should have the following qualifications:

- ▶ Proven results in related leadership positions
- ▶ Demonstrated leadership development abilities
- ▶ Experience overseeing a large budget
- ▶ A bachelor's degree in business, technology, or other related field
- ▶ Ability to communicate clearly and effectively
- ▶ Capacity to manage multiple individuals and teams

# CHEMISTRY AND CULTURE

***As you consider these or other positions in your church, make sure that you are giving enough weight to individuals who can get along with others and fit in with the church's culture. The greatest pedigree in the world will not make up for someone who doesn't work well with a team or gel with your church culture.***

You can teach someone who lacks the requisite experience, but you can't teach someone to be a cultural fit. You can't make someone who has the ideal education and experience love the church.

Recruiting and hiring a new team member is exciting and can really energize the organization. Hiring the right person for the right position benefits everyone! Having a strategic plan for what positions you plan to hire for can create achievable, next-step goals—and give your team something to look forward to.

***Happy hiring!***

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