



# **STOP** **COMPROMISING**

**5 Ways To Get The  
Right People Serving**

**By: Chase Snyder**

# STOP COMPROMISING

Few student pastors talk about the joys of recruiting, interviewing, screening, and placing new volunteers.

I've never seen a leader post a long article about how incredible it is to run background checks and screen new volunteers!

"You guys won't believe how blessed I am to file paperwork! #ILoveMyJob" – Said No Pastor Ever

Regardless of the size of your church or ministry, I bet that you could use a few more volunteers. There never seems to be enough people to jump in on God's mission. Don't forget that Jesus himself dealt with this same issue of not having enough volunteers ([Matthew 9:35-10:1](#)).

You might be wondering, "Is it really my responsibility to recruit and train volunteers? After all, I was hired to teach students." That is a great question. If you are in a leadership position within an organization, whether paid or unpaid, you are responsible for building a team. As the leader, it is your responsibility to recruit, train, and empower a great team. You alone are responsible for leading a great team. In their book *Extreme Leadership*, former Navy Seals Jocko Willink and Leif Babin tell us that, "The most fundamental and important truths at the heart of Extreme Ownership: there are no bad teams, only bad leaders."

Since there are no bad teams, just bad leaders, what are you going to do to ensure that you screen, train, and develop new ministry volunteers?

Great visions fail when the wrong people are in place. It doesn't matter how winsome your personality is at bringing scores of people to your ministry. The right people on your team enable you to accomplish the vision and mission of your organization. It is your decision whether you will make excuses for the team you have been dealt or if you will make progress in leading them to accomplish God's vision for the ministry.

As we feel the pressure of needing more volunteers, many of us settle for less-than-committed “warm bodies” that will ensure our adult-to-student ratios are ok but will never invest into the lives of students.

Instead of searching for the **right person**, we are quick to place **any person**. Adding *any person* to our teams always leads to us having a headache! In many cases it’s better to have less volunteers serving than to add the wrong people to the team.

**We know that:**

- the right person will take ownership.
- the right person will connect with students throughout the week.
- the right person will minister with an open heart and ready hands.

Ultimately the success of your ministry will be defined by the spiritual and organizational strength of your team members.

I love this gem from Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan in their book *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*: “If you look at any business that’s consistently successful, you’ll find that its leaders focus intensely and relentlessly on people selection.”

Every ministry knows that investing in people is of the utmost importance. This eBook will help you to define your organization’s process for recruiting, interviewing, and retaining the right people for your ministry.

So how do we go about getting the right people to serve in our ministries?

**Chaperones don't  
develop disciples -  
spiritual leaders  
develop disciples.**



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# 5 WAYS TO GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE SERVING

## 1. Evaluate Your Specific Needs

The more precise you are when searching for volunteers, the better chance you will obtain incredible workers.

You wouldn't hire an associate without identifying your needs. A flippant "We need workers to help with youth" may guilt people into working, but it will not attract the right volunteer for the needs of the ministry.

Take your time and pray that God will provide the right volunteer for each opening. You need the right person for the right job. Everything hinges on your ministry's leadership. Discovering what you are looking for enables you to discover the perfect person.

Don't become desperate. Desperate people will fill a volunteer position with anyone who is breathing. Don't be that person. You will be setting your ministry up for frustration. Bringing people in to be "warm bodies" in a room will cause you more headaches in the long run.

## 2. Interview Every Potential Volunteer

Volunteer interviews are necessary for every size church. Interviewing potential volunteers gives you a chance to share vision, hear their story, discover their gifts/talents, and screen/background check each person who serves in your ministry. In essence, you are seeking to gain a clear picture of who this person is and how God has gifted them for ministry. Building a relational ministry starts with knowing your volunteers. An interview is the best way to share about the ministry and discover the new person's heart for ministry. When people hear the word "interview," thoughts of suits, conference rooms, and intimidating questions flood their heads. A volunteer interview should be the opposite of this picture. Make the interview informal, the conversation light, and the time relational. Meet off campus if possible. Buy the potential volunteer some coffee – if they are going to serve with preschoolers they need all the coffee they can get! During the interview, you need to discuss the next steps – background check,

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child protection training, visiting ministry areas. During this process, you will want to ensure that the potential volunteer is going to be a great fit. We know that God has gifted each disciple to minister. By keeping someone in your ministry who isn't a great fit is robbing another ministry of an incredible volunteer, and it robs that person of the joy and fulfillment of serving within their giftedness.

### **3. Let Them Visit Various Ministries**

The volunteer has cleared the background checks, and now it is time for him to visit some service opportunities. Remember that you know what it takes to serve in each area because you are the ministry leader. Sharing vision is necessary, but most people are visual learners. It is difficult for them to hear of a new concept and grasp how that works in real time and space. That is why you need to allow potential volunteers to visit various ministry roles in your church.

Notice that I said various ministry roles in your church. The first few a new volunteer may visit might not be a fit for her to serve in. You will have to over communicate the importance of getting the volunteer placed in the correct area. Many people will be shy about telling you they didn't fit well in an area that they visited. Give them opportunities to experience what it means to serve in different roles.

Follow up the day after they visit with a quick email and guide them to finding the best spot for them to serve. Don't be afraid to refer a volunteer to another area of the church. If a new person isn't clicking with your ministry, guide them to another area of the church. Don't be selfish. You are not ministering in silos – when your church thrives, your ministry thrives.

### **4. Give A Volunteer Job Description**

Committing to serve in a ministry is an incredible investment of someone's time and energy. The best way to honor your volunteer's precious time is to provide each person with a volunteer job description. Volunteer job descriptions need to be short one-pagers that outline when volunteers should arrive, their primary responsibilities, special events to attend, and whom they report to in case of sickness or an emergency. Giving clear expectations on the front end allows your new leader to hit the ground running.

Will every volunteer love a job description? No. Some of your new volunteers are going to yawn at the thought of a volunteer job description. Remember, you aren't creating a job description for their enjoyment; you are creating one for their ownership. It is amazing how a one-page document can give a volunteer a sense of ownership and understanding of your ministry.

Job descriptions  
may not bring  
excitement but  
they will **build**  
**ownership.**



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## **5. Ask For A Yearlong Commitment**

I have had several conversations with potential leaders who are afraid of letting the church down if they decide to step down. Perhaps it is because of our constant requests for more leaders. One of the first conversations I have with a new volunteer is to let them know that I'm asking for a one-year commitment. I understand that life happens, people have babies, and some phases are busier than others. To give people a healthy opportunity to transition into a new role, I simply ask them to serve for one year.

A yearlong commitment has incredible benefits for you, the leader. Have you ever wanted to have a difficult conversation with a volunteer about their lack of passion or investment but found it difficult to start because they have been serving longer than you have been at the ministry? Some situations must be addressed promptly, but other conversations about values or behaviors can be brought up at the year-end conversation. At the end of the volunteer's year commitment you are able to have a conversation about how last year went and cast vision for the next year. This gives you an open dialogue to encourage, coach, or move your volunteers. Perhaps a new ministry has started and one of your volunteers would be perfect for the ministry team. A year-long commitment is long enough to retain leaders and flexible enough to navigate life phases.

### **So, You Have Great Leaders, Now What?**

#### **Train And Coach Each Volunteer**

Once you have the right people serving, you can't leave them alone for the next year – you must train and coach your volunteers. While there are a few initial trainings most ministries need – like child-protection training – your organization must identify key trainings that are essential for your new volunteers. I would be hesitant to add multiple trainings at once. Honor your volunteer's time and realize that the best training is coaching someone as they serve. TrainedUp.org and MinistryGrid.com are two websites that are perfect to train your volunteers without calling meetings at your organization.

Have you noticed that the best sports coaches are vocally coaching and encouraging their team during games? Bad coaches sit back and allow their team to function as it would. Be a great coach and offer tips, encouragements, and ideas as your leaders serve. This is the best way to train leaders, and it will further honor their time by keeping them from attending more meetings.

## **Empower And Send Them out**

As you train and as you coach, you must allow each volunteer to take ownership of his/her role. Launching volunteers into service opportunities is more than a momma bird pushing her babies out of the nest to see if they can fly. Leaders take ownership and responsibility to empower each volunteer and ensure that they are connected to their purpose in the organization. Many leaders are either a micromanager, which kills leadership and creativity, or a strander, which leaves people alone and without direction. The middle ground between micromanaging and stranding is what you are aiming for. Empowering your volunteers will take significant time and emotional energy, but it will cause the ministry to expand beyond your individual ability.

# CHASE SNYDER AND MINISTRY BUBBLE



Chase Snyder is a father, pastor, and writer. He is also the founder of [MinistryBubble.com](http://MinistryBubble.com), a content development company that creates print and digital resources to help leaders turn their ideas into ministry.

Chase and his wife, Anne, have two children and live in Georgia. Their passions are raising their kids, encouraging ministry leaders, and serving students – all while making much of Jesus.

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