



BULL'S-EYE RECRUITING

Bill Anderson

The bulk of the actual ministry that happens in our ministries *isn't something you and I do as leaders*-it's what the people we've carefully chosen, equipped, and placed do. There's no doubt that these people are critically important to our ministry's target and direction.

I love Proverbs 26:10: "An employer who hires a fool or a bystander is like an archer who shoots at random." This verse captures the essence of a situation most leaders recognize: A promising new volunteer turns out to be...well, not so promising. Recruiting errors can be time, energy, and ministry draining. The key, naturally, is to avoid them. Here's how to proceed wisely in all recruiting situations so you find the perfect fit for your ministry.

Lay a foundation of prayer. You know recruiting is a year-round endeavor, so don't limit your prayers for volunteers to once a year during your big recruiting push. Continually ask God to send people-and look for their potential-all year long.

Do your homework. Have an application process in place, even if your new recruit has been with the church for 50 years. The reality is, it's just not enough for someone to want to minister to children in today's world. You've got to have an easy-to-navigate, non-threatening process that allows you to find out more than the name and address of a person. At minimum, ask for a brief history of faith; personal, professional, and ministry references; and a background check. These three "gatekeeper" areas will help alert you to any need for further questioning.

Prepare new volunteers. Lay down your expectations before the person starts. Whether it's in a class or a meeting with you or the ministry leadership team, every new volunteer must understand your overall philosophy of ministry and how it fits in the larger vision of your church.

Make your expectations clear. Be very upfront about the responsibilities of the position and how your ministry operates. Be open about your leadership style-if you're very hands-on, like one-to-one communication, or have a specific philosophy about kids, share it.

Emphasize training and development. Recruit people who want to learn. Train new volunteers on nuts-and-bolts processes and expectations-don't just expect them to figure it out. And continue developing your team by taking them to conferences, sharing information and articles, and having one-to-one conversations.

You may not hit a bull's-eye every time you recruit, but these principles will get you closer.

{Excerpted from [Children's Ministry](#) magazine}

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