

The Art of the Ask

How to recruit a high capacity volunteer leader in a single conversation.

In Acts 6, the apostles don't just think about a role. They describe a person. *Good reputation, full of the Spirit, full of wisdom.* The person is just as important as the assignment. Person. Role. Then grant them authority.

Often we run that backwards. We start with a hole in the ministry and then broadcast the need in hopes for anybody willing to fill it. That is why the ask so often feels like begging. High capacity leaders respond to personal asks.

Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

ACTS 6:3 (ESV)

The atmosphere of the ask has to match the responsibility of the role. Work through this resource in preparation for that critical conversation.

PART ONE

Before You Say a Word

Pray like crazy. Humble yourself. Believe that God has prepared the perfect person. Then consider this:

1 Define the Role

Small enough to fit on a notecard. Not too much detail, not too little. Give them something they can say yes or no to.

THE ROLE IN ONE SENTENCE

TWO OR THREE RESPONSIBILITIES

HOURS PER WEEK | MEETINGS | TERM

2 Brainstorm the Person

They should be bearing fruit. People are already following them. A bright spot in the church. Already busy. Think volunteer first, not paid.

Business owner

Retired

Teacher or coach

Stay at home parent

Remote worker

Controls own schedule

Uniquely skilled

NAMES THAT COME TO MIND

FIRST CHOICE

3 Why Them

Three things you have actually watched them do. Real observations. What have you seen in them that makes them perfect for the role?

I HAVE SEEN YOU

I HAVE SEEN YOU

I HAVE SEEN YOU

4 The Honest Inventory

Every bit of fuzziness you hide now becomes dysfunction later. Say it out loud in the meeting. Write it here first.

WHAT IS MESSY OR UNCLEAR RIGHT NOW

WHERE I AM WEAK AS THEIR LEADER

THE GOSPEL PAYOFF IF THIS WORKS

5 Plan the Venue

Make the ask “big.” A nice restaurant. Your home. Pattern it after how you would recruit an out of town candidate.

WHERE WE WILL MEET

Five Ways to Blow It

One of these is your default when you get desperate. Identify it before the meeting.

Saying no for them

Don't fixate on all the reasons they can't do this. Too busy, wrong season, not interested. Let them say their own yes or no.

The soft sell

Don't say, 'This won't take much time. You could do this in your sleep.' Leaders are not moved by easy. They'll step up if it requires their best.

The guilt trip

Don't use guilt motivation. It might get them to say yes once, but it won't sustain them and they won't come back.

The victim

Don't present yourself as burned out, barely keeping your head above water. Nobody signs on to a sinking ship.

The cattle call

Don't recruit from the stage. It suggests anyone with a pulse can do this. High capacity leaders need a personal ask.

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DEREK SANFORD

The Conversation

This can't happen from the stage. Not in an email, text, or quick convo. But a table, a meal, where you can look them in the eye. Make 'the ask' a big deal, because it is one.

1 Warm up. Do not rush this.

Ask about family, work, what they are laughing about lately. You are meeting with a real person with a real life. Lean in to that.

2 Name the moment.

"You are probably wondering why I asked you here. I have a big ask for you and I can't wait to talk to you about it."

3 Describe the problem.

Give them some context about what is going on at the church and what brought you to the realization that this particular initiative would have a multiplied impact on the growth or health of the church. Leaders want a dilemma to solve.

YOUR WORDS

4 Tell them "why them."

Tell them what you've seen in them. Say, "Your name kept coming up in different rooms." Describe what God revealed when you prayed about this. Say, "Asking you is a step of obedience for me." Then tell them why they'd be perfect for this role.

YOUR WORDS

5 Say the word volunteer out loud.

This role is not paid. Here is how much of our leadership is already carried by people just like you.

6 Be honest about the situation.

What is the real state of the team that they'd be joining. What is the true culture of the staff. How many hours will it really take per week to pull this off. What are your own strengths and weaknesses.

7 Name the gospel payoff.

Tell them plainly what changes eternally if this works. This is the sentence that will remain in their memory even when the ministry gets hard.

YOUR WORDS

8 Hand them a job description.

One page. Something they can hold, pray over, and say yes or no to. Not too much or too little detail. The role, a few specific responsibilities, the hours, and the reporting structure. If the formality scares them off, they were the wrong person.

9 Give them a few days to respond.

Ask, "What is your first reaction? What questions do you have already?" Then tell them to take a few days to pray about it. Give a specific plan for follow up. Who is contacting who and by when.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Do not leave this as just a 'good idea.' Take action.

Put a real date on your calendar. Pick a place that is not your office. Do it before you go to bed tonight.

WHO I AM ASKING

THE DATE

WHERE WE WILL MEET
