

TOP 10 WAYS...

TO RECRUIT COUNCIL MEMBERS

Many churches and councils find RECRUITMENT to be their most challenging task.

So, we've compiled our Top 10 list to help make it a little less daunting!

1. **Have a Recruitment Strategy** – *Crafting and enacting a well thought-out Recruitment Strategy is a must before you begin searching for new council members. Unfortunately, potential council members aren't likely to magically appear at your doorstep imploring you to commit them to service, even if you did compose a fun and catchy bulletin announcement. If you aren't going beyond saying, "So... who should we ask this year?", then you're in trouble! The first problem with this is that **if it's everybody's task, it's nobody's task**. You gotta have a plan!*
2. **Start On Time!** – *This one sounds like a no-brainer but it's amazing how often boards and committees put off 'recruitment' until the last minute. Be sure to include an appropriate timeline in your Recruitment Strategy. As most of us will agree, recruitment can take longer than we think and the sooner you begin, the longer your nominees will have to carefully and prayerfully consider the ask.*
3. **Know Who You Are Looking For** – *Figure out what your Council's strategic priorities are. What skills or expertise do you need on your council to help you achieve those priorities? Who is your church now and who do you want to be in the community in the next five years or so? What Elders or Deacons are finishing up their terms and what gaps will be created once they are done? This will help immensely in finding the right people at the right time.*
4. **Educate Your Congregation on What Being a Council Member Actually Means** – *Sometimes people say "No" to a nomination because they don't really understand what they are being asked to do. Carve out time to educate your congregation on what the 'job descriptions' are for an Elder or Deacon. Here are some ideas to get you started:
 - a. **Hold an 'Open House'**. Invite members of your congregation to check out a meeting so they can see your team in action! This will help people see that the work you do MATTERS and is moving your church's mission and vision along. Just be aware of any contentious or sensitive material being discussed;
 - b. **Have written 'job descriptions' for each role on Council.** Always have these readily available (throughout the year) and make sure they are kept up-to-date;
 - c. **Hold an Information Session** – Get creative and think about what would work for your church. Some churches plan these immediately after Sunday Morning Worship instead asking members to attend a weeknight meeting. Remember to keep it clear,*

concise and interesting (no more than an hour.) Throw in a little bit of fun and include some light refreshments.

5. **Remember There is Parity Between “Offices”** – Again, this may sound like a no-brainer, but it’s important to ensure your entire congregation know the unique gifts and abilities required for each role on Council. Your church’s diaconate is NOT an “Elder Training Ground”, or vice versa.
6. **Involve Ministry Leaders and/or Former Council Members** – Including more ministry leaders in your search will extend your reach. They’ve likely worked alongside or crossed paths with a variety of your members and can speak to any gifts and abilities that would align with the work of an Elder or Deacon.
7. **Visit with Each Nominee** – While this one may be a new concept, it may be valuable for the Nominating Committee to hold an “Interview” with each nominee. This will help the Committee get a sense for who this person is and if they will be a good fit for the office they have been nominated for. There are several ways this can be done well and DMC can give you some help with this!
8. **Remember That “No” Doesn’t Always Mean “Never”** – If a nominee says no, don’t take that as a flat-out rejection. His/her current schedule may not allow the time required or he/she may feel they don’t have the gifts or passions required for the role, yet. Continue your contact and awareness raising: remember that recruitment is an on-going process.
9. **Treat Your New and Current Council Members Like Gold!** – You may be wondering what this has to do with recruitment. But if you’re having trouble finding new council members, don’t be afraid to ask **why**: What are our current or retired council members saying/sharing with their fellow church members? Do we take the time to invest in the care of current council members? Do we provide ample training? Do our council members feel appreciated? *Everybody likes to have their contributions acknowledged, especially volunteers! It’s free and easy to do so and the fruit of doing this can have far-reaching benefits!*
10. **Never, EVER Compromise** – While it can happen from time-to-time that not enough ‘qualified’ persons will allow their name to appear on the ballot, it’s important to hold fast to your Recruitment Strategy as well as what your church determines as the irrefutable qualities needed in a Council Member. Remember it’s far better to pick the right person over the available one. God ALWAYS provides what we need exactly when we need it. If possible, have the patience to keep searching and waiting. Your church’s Mission – GOD’S MISSION – will still move forward despite an empty chair or two around the Council Table.

Did you find these tips helpful?

Find more help with Recruitment on our website:

diaconalministries.com/resources/ under “Fundamentals of Recruitment”

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Diaconal Ministries Canada exists to inspire, empower, and equip deacons as they animate their congregations to join in God’s transforming work in their communities.

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