

The Volunteer Bench Issue - Episode 451

You need great volunteers if you want to hire internally. But to develop volunteers, you need more great staff...

It can feel like an endless cycle. But it doesn't have to be.

Trying to *find* leaders as quickly as possible leads to high turnover and hard conversations. But when you *develop* leaders with a sustainable volunteer leadership pipeline, leaders are identified earlier and developed more intentionally, which ultimately results in a healthier, higher performing church team.

In this new series, we'll share a practical, repeatable pathway for increasing leadership capacity. We'll talk through **clear levels of leadership: strengthening your volunteer bench, developing volunteer leaders and equipping staff leaders.**

Today, we're starting at the foundation—***the volunteer bench itself***—because you have to know how to fill the bench and how to identify leadership capacity before you can develop great volunteer leaders.

Key Quotes

- “If we're going to build a volunteer bench or a leadership pipeline, it has to be done intentionally.”
- “Developing a leadership bench and developing a leadership pipeline require risk.”
- “If you can't develop your bench and identify and develop volunteers into volunteer leaders, you'll never have a strong internal pipeline for staff.”
- “Anecdotal data is not a replacement for actual data that tells the systemic problem or solution that's going on in the background.”
- “The volunteer pipeline isn't just a development tool; it's also a scouting tool.”
- “One of the best ways we found to see how much capacity a person has as a leader is to give them a problem. Leaders love to solve problems.”
- “The volunteer bench is not a logistics problem; it's a discipleship opportunity.”

Self-Assessment: How Are We Doing?

1. What percentage of our adults and students are serving at least once a month? Are we meeting the healthy benchmark percentage of 50 to 55% of our attendance?
2. For every volunteer leader we have, how many people do we have in average attendance? How close are we to the healthy benchmark ratio of 10:1?
3. What is our current volunteer recruitment strategy? How effective does it seem to be?
4. What is our process for assessing volunteers who may have greater leadership capacity?

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