

1

PROFILING THE POSITION

► Before hiring an assistant you must decide what kind of assistant you will need. A receptionist, secretary, administrative assistant, executive assistant, office manager, and business administrator each serve different roles. Following are brief descriptions to help you identify what will work best for you:

- Receptionist—greet people, answer phones, and complete routine tasks as assigned
- Secretary—handle correspondence, records, filing, and other routine tasks as assigned
- Administrative Assistant or Executive Assistant—direct the work of the organization, taking the initiative to assist supervisors
- Office manager—oversee all staff and operations in an office
- Business Administrator—oversee any business related to the organization, such as finances, properties, and insurance

Usually an administrative assistant, executive assistant, office manager, or business administrator will act with more initiative and independence than a receptionist or a secretary. The administrative assistant will set up the systems that a secretary will work with. An administrative assistant will write procedures; a secretary will follow them. A secretary usually prefers being told what to do and how it should be done. An administrative assistant will generally know what needs to be done and will have several strategies on how to do it. Those in administrative roles will require less instruction and supervision.

To make the best decision in selecting an assistant, you will need to create a job description and a written understanding or job contract for the position.

JOB DESCRIPTION

You can begin putting together a job description by examining how you spend your time. To do this you can use the time study on pages 68-70. Studying how you use your time will help you decide what your priorities are and what you need help with.

Next, tap into the wisdom, knowledge, and experience of others. It might be valuable to have the church governing board/council work with you on the job description. Talk to other pastors and businesspersons to get an idea of how their administrative assistants are serving. Ask for copies of their job descriptions.

The job description should be specific. Although the description will change once you begin working as a team and you assess what the strengths and weaknesses of the assistant are, it is important to start off with a detailed description to give every opportunity for the person to be successful. My first job description was six pages long and ended with “and all other sundry duties as assigned by the pastor.” That should have been my first clue!

On the next several pages are work sheets that will aid you in creating a job description. Completing these work sheets will help you in your thinking process, and by using them, you will be able to draft a description in under two hours.

Taking time to complete these exercises will assist you tremendously in the interviewing process. They will help you identify what your basic requirements for the position are. You will be determining what qualifications, personality, spiritual gifts, and skills you prefer and prioritizing tasks you will require the administrative assistant to be responsible for. You will intuitively begin to recognize the person you are looking for because you already know what you need.

If you already have an administrative assistant, but he or she does not have a job description yet, you may want to have him or her complete the work sheets and draft a description for your approval.

Defining the Position

1. Start the job description with a mission or vision statement for your church. This will inspire your team members and encourage vision alignment.

Our Church's Mission Statement

2. Next, make an introductory statement by answering these basic questions in general terms and in one sentence.

- What does the person do? Manage the church office? Assist others in their ministries?

- To whom is the person predominately responsible? Pastor? Board/council members? Parishioners?

- Why was this job created? What is the main purpose of this worker? To answer phones? To free the pastor up to do the things only he or she can do? To help department heads?

Basic Qualifications

After broadly defining the position, you are ready to begin determining basic qualifications. Using the chart below will help you. Put a checkmark beside any qualifications you believe are mandatory. Add any additional basic requirements you have.

	Attends this church regularly
	Attends midweek programming regularly
	Is a member of the church in good standing
	Models Christian character
	Will provide a police report
	Spends time in prayer and Scripture reading
	Is currently involved in ministry

Personality

The following checklist will help you get a good idea of what personality type you are looking for. Check off the characteristics preferred for the position. You can't have them all! Choose about 10 traits you feel are most needed for your situation. Some spaces have been left for you to pencil in any other characteristics you feel are important.

Accurate	Discerning	Mobilizing	Self-motivated
Action-oriented	Encouraging	Motivating	Skilled
Adaptable	Enthusiastic	Optimistic	Social
Analytical	Flexible	Organized	Spirit-led
Cheerful	Follow-through	Patient	Steadfast
Communicative	Friendly	Peace-making	Supportive
Confidential	Helpful	People-oriented	Systematic
Conscientious	Independent	Personable	Task-oriented
Coordinates	Industrious	Planner	Teachable
Consistent	Initiates	Prioritizes	Time manager
Consults	Inventive	Problem solver	Vicarious
Cooperative	Investigative	Procedural	Welcoming
Creative	Learns quickly	Productive	
Decisive	Lighthearted	Quality-conscious	
Deliberate	Logical	Realistic	
Dependable	Low-key	Recruiter	
Detailed	Methodical	Resilient	

As you choose from the list, you will begin to see emerging a tendency toward either more of a “people person” or a “task-oriented person.” Your choices may lean more toward someone with initiative or someone who is compliant.

Please note that some of the characteristics have been bolded to highlight traits needed in an administrative assistant. If you chose mostly highlighted traits, you will need to hire someone who is more administrative than secretarial. These choices will be used soon to help form the job description.

Abilities

Choose some of the following statements that are important to your situation. Please add any additional statements that would help to clarify your requirements.

The administrative assistant has the ability to . . .

<input type="checkbox"/>	Adapt work style to different environments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refocus and get back on track following interruptions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Find the balance between quality and quantity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organize time and prioritize to meet deadlines
<input type="checkbox"/>	Start new projects, plans, or procedures

	Make sound judgments independently
	Proactively build appropriate, positive relationships
	Constructively resolve conflict using a variety of strategies
	Develop strategies for motivating others
	Understand the benefits of deploying volunteers
	Be Spirit-led, relying on the Lord for help
	View the workplace as the mission field
	Stay the course under pressure
	Rebuild after setbacks or loss
	Keep a multitude of tasks and projects on task simultaneously
	Devise systems that enhance efficiency

Spiritual Gifts*

Select the spiritual gifts you believe would be most beneficial to the position, and then number them in order of priority.

	ADMINISTRATION: The God-given ability to coordinate the details of a ministry in order to harmoniously deploy people to fulfill the goals and purposes of the church.
	APOSTLESHIP: One who is commissioned by God to plant and develop churches by seeking converts and building them up as the Body of Christ.
	DISCERNMENT: Being enabled by the Holy Spirit to evaluate whether another person is speaking on God's behalf and to recognize what is of the Spirit of God and what is not. This gift is usually associated with Christian maturity.
	EVANGELISM: The enablement of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel so a nonbeliever will exercise saving faith and become part of the Body of Christ.
	EXHORTATION OR COUNSELING: The enablement of the Holy Spirit to speak words of encouragement, comfort, and spiritual guidance to others so they are made more aware of God's saving work in their lives, and thus, they are strengthened spiritually.
	FAITH: The spiritual ability to maintain strong confidence in the promises of God and His will for the future, enabling that person to evidence God's power through strong acts of trust.
	GIVING: The enablement of the Holy Spirit to give liberally of one's resources to the work of God. This gift is measured not by its amount but by the person's willingness to give freely in accordance with his or her ability, whether it is great or small. This giving always results in the increase of encouragement and faith within the Body of Christ.

*Spiritual gifts and definitions in this work sheet are from *The Complete Spiritual Gifts Kit*, by Daniel R. Gales (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2006), 163-64. Used by permission.

Profiling the Position

HEALING: God's enablement to bring physical and/or spiritual wholeness to an individual or group.
HELPS: The God-given ability to come alongside another Christian and give the support and help that enables that person to be more successful in ministry.
HOSPITALITY: Hospitality is an ability and aptitude for entertainment used by the Holy Spirit to extend the warmth of Christian fellowship to others. This ministry is offered freely to all without any thought of return or exclusiveness. Those benefiting from the gift are built up in hope and faith in Christ.
INTERCESSORY PRAYER: All Christians are encouraged to develop their prayer life. Intercessory prayer is a Christian discipline of mature believers who invest much prayer time on the behalf of others.
KNOWLEDGE: The God-given ability to discover spiritual truth through research, analysis, and life experience so it can be practically applied in the Body of Christ.
LEADERSHIP: The ability to clearly see and understand God's future for the church (or a ministry) and to transfer that vision to others in a way that inspires commitment to the vision and energizes them to work toward its attainment.
MERCY: The God-given ability to empathize with people in their time of need and to cheerfully fill those needs, simply and wholeheartedly, resulting in strengthening their faith and the Body of Christ.
MIRACLES: The spiritual enabling of God to perform unique acts that cannot be explained by any other means. This gift always results in a deeper understanding of the Word of God and numerical and spiritual growth in the community of believers.
MISSIONARY: The commissioning of the Holy Spirit to be a messenger and representative of Christ in another culture.
PASTOR/SHEPHERD: The divinely given ability through which a person provides spiritual care and guidance for other persons, particularly groups of persons, within the Body of Christ.
PROPHECY: The gift of prophecy is the God-given ability to preach. The prophet receives the message from God, and also the understanding of how God desires humans to respond to the message when it is spoken. The source of the message can be from the Bible or personal revelation that is affirmed by faith and the Word of God.
SERVICE: The God-given ability of actively giving service to the Body of Christ. This gift supports the ministry of the Word by ensuring the tasks of the Body are completed and the needs of people are being met.
TEACHING: The enablement of the Holy Spirit to effectively transfer spiritual knowledge so listeners understand God's Word, are drawn to Christ, and incorporate the truth in their lifestyles.
WISDOM: The enablement of the Holy Spirit to understand the issues of a specific situation and then apply spiritual truth so God's people can make Christlike choices.

Skills

Skills are something learned rather than innate. Identify the skills that would be helpful in this position.

Basic understanding of computers—hardware and software installation and setup, wireless networking, etc.
Bookkeeping ability
Competency in PowerPoint
Computer skills in (the names of the programs your church uses)
Database creation and management experience
Filing methods and ability
Knowledge in use of audiovisual equipment, such as digital cameras, projectors, soundboards, etc.
Familiarity with multiline telephone systems
Spreadsheet creation and management proficiency
Typing with speed and accuracy

	Web site creation or maintenance capability
	Working knowledge of a variety of equipment, such as fax machines, photocopiers, scanner, postage meter, etc.

Tasks

Next, from the following list, check the tasks that you will need the assistant to do. This is a very comprehensive list. It includes items from a variety of ministry settings including volunteer positions. It is detailed and many of the duties could be grouped; however, it is important to look at the list in this format to help you distinguish between a secretary and an administrative assistant. For example: If you are hiring a secretary, he or she might maintain the policy manual. An administrative assistant might compile all policies from previous meeting minutes, write additional needed policies for board/council approval, research policies in other churches and adapt them to your church, and organize a policy manual. Tasks requiring the skill and initiative of an administrative assistant have been bolded.

The choices you make at this step will help you determine if you will hire an administrative or secretarial person. In any case, your assistant cannot do all of these tasks and none of the apostles are applying for the job. If your assistant is a secretary who is a volunteer, part-time, or in training, you will need to prioritize which tasks will be put into the initial job description and minimize the number of tasks you choose from the bolded ones marked for administrative assistants.

You might want to give every task a number between 1 and 5 depending on how important the task is to you. Doing this will give you good information for formulating a job description that suits your personal situation. Your own areas of difficulty should increase the priority given to the task.

Absentee follow-up letters	
Absentee phone calls	
Accounts payable and receivable	
Administrate medical/dental plan	
Advertise	
Analyze results and project conclusions from surveys, statistics, financial data, historical data, etc.	
Annual reports	
Answer phones	
Attend committee meetings	
Attend staff meetings	
Audiovisual production	
Back up computer	
Bookkeeping	
Budget projection and management	
Building security	
Bulk mailings	
Bulletin board	
Bulletin production	
Calendar coordination for all church events and with district events	

Profiling the Position

Chair meetings in absence of pastor	
Complete government forms	
Compose correspondence in own or pastor's name	
Computer maintenance and troubleshooting	
Computer setup	
Coordinate greeters, ushers	
Coordinate volunteers	
Count offerings	
Database creation	
Database inputting	
Decorate for special events	
Design promotions	
Develop procedures	
Directory updates	
Draft reports for pastor	
E-mail	
Equipment sign-out	
Fax	
File	
Follow up task assignments from meetings	
Funeral prep	
Greet people	
Key distribution	
Library assistance	
Mail	
Maintain expense records	
Maintain legal records	
Maintain mailing lists	
Maintain membership list	
Maintain music database	
Maintain policy manual	
Make coffee	
Make resource library	
Meeting minutes	
Meeting reminders	
Meeting setup	
Newsletter	
Nominating committee work	
Order flowers for hospital, funerals, etc.	

THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S HANDBOOK

Order supplies—Sunday School, office, custodial, etc.	
Organize	
Oversee contracts for phone, copier, etc.	
Oversee department heads	
Oversee food bank	
Oversee hospital visitation	
Oversee insurance coverage for vehicles, building, and equipment	
Oversee secretarial staff	
Payroll	
Photocopy	
Pickup and delivery of supplies, flowers, etc.	
Policy writing	
PowerPoint creation for meetings and services	
Prepare refreshments for meetings, funerals, etc.	
Prepare scripts for dedications, membership services, etc.	
Produce agendas for meetings	
Produce brochures	
Produce giving receipts	
Produce letterhead, business cards, etc.	
Proofread and edit	
Record offerings	
Record pastoral visits	
Recruit volunteers	
Repair equipment	
Report to district	
Research sermon illustrations	
Retreat planning	
Scan	
Schedule for pastor	
Schedule use of facility	
Seminar planning	
Send birthday, anniversary, special occasion cards	
Set up conference calls	
Set up filing system	
Set up library system	
Set up list for mass mail outs	
Set up membership record	
Set up policy manual	
Special service planning	

Spreadsheet creation and inputting	
Statistician	
Sunday setup	
Support department heads	
Technical computer support	
Track absenteeism and project theories	
Train secretaries	
Train volunteers	
Transcribe notes	
Travel arrangements	
Type	
Update policy manual	
Visitor tracking	
Web site creation	
Web site maintenance	
Wedding planning	
Welcome packets	
Write office policy for pastor and board/council approval	
Write grant proposals	
Write scripts for dedications, Veterans Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc.	

Making the Job Description

Using the responses from the previous work sheets, create a job description by filling in the blanks on the work sheet on pages 21-22. A sample job description is included in the Written Understanding or Job Contract Sample on pages 23-25.

Remember, a job description for a secretary needs to be more specific and detailed than the job description for an administrative assistant. An administrative assistant will take more initiative in recognizing responsibilities. For an administrative assistant many of the tasks can be grouped. The description could say, "Meeting preparation." For a secretary you would need to specify, "Send out report requests, e-mail meeting reminders, produce reports, take minutes, generate a task list from the minutes, follow up on completion of tasks, and distribute minutes."

WRITTEN UNDERSTANDING OR JOB CONTRACT

Once you have completed your job description, you are ready to complete a job contract or written understanding. The job contract or written understanding will include the job description and should specifically and clearly state expectations about wages and employee arrangements and policies. Take care to formulate your statements so that they answer any potential questions.

Entering policies into the written understanding is crucial. One associate pastor I heard of wanted to take his two weeks of vacation in two-day increments. To add to that, he wanted to take the two-day holidays over seven Sundays! It really happened. You need to be sure your policies address all eventualities.

A very comprehensive listing of employee policies can be found on pages 105-12. They include the following:

- Attendance at church functions

THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S HANDBOOK

- Away arrangements
- Background check
- Benefits
- Bereavement
- Calculation date
- Compensation
- Constitutional agreement
- Denominational event attendance
- Dress code
- Due notice
- Emergency or crisis arrangements—church
- Emergency or crisis arrangements—personal
- Equipment provision
- Grievance procedure
- Hospitality
- Hours of work
- Leave of absence
- Long-term disability
- Maternity or parental leave
- Mileage allowance
- Overtime
- Payroll administration
- Performance review
- Probationary period
- Professional development
- Responsibility guide
- Safeguarding
- Sick time
- Termination release
- Term of employment
- Use of personal phone for work
- Vacation time

You should also include a statement in the document that affirms both the employer and employee are subject to the stipulations of your general church constitution and governmental employment standards.

Give diligent attention to completing this section and you will benefit through excellent staff relationships and legal protection.

Written Understanding or Job Contract Form

**Written Understanding Between
[Name of Church] and [Name of Person]
[Job Title]**

Date

Mission or Vision (from page 12)

_____.

The [job title] ministers by _____ and is responsible to _____ for the purpose of _____ . (from page 12)

Qualifications: (from page 12)

The person in this position will be (from page 13)

The person will have the ability to (from page 13)

Spiritual gifts integral to this person are (from page 14)

Basic skills needed include (from page 15)

Responsibilities*: (from page 16)

*You may want to list responsibilities by category. Categories could be organized in any of the following ways:

- Daily, monthly, annually, or as needed
- High priority, medium priority, or minimal priority
- Regular duties, special projects, etc.

THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S HANDBOOK

Monthly Compensation:

Cash per month	\$	
Health care	\$	
Group insurance	\$	
Other (403[b], etc.)	\$	
TOTAL:	\$	

Policy Arrangements

(Use the policy questions on pages 105 to 112 to assist you in completing this section. It is essential to put the policy statements into this document to make certain the employee, pastor, and church governing board/council have the same understanding and are in agreement and for legal purposes.)

Hours of work are _____ .

With a _____ hour paid or unpaid break for lunch.

Days of work are _____.

For a total of _____ per week.

Enter policy statements here:

_____ Employee's signature	_____ Pastor's signature	_____ Governing board/council chairperson's signature
Print name above	Print name above	Print name above
_____ Date	_____ Date	_____ Date

Written Understanding or Job Contract Sample

**Hope Community Church
Job Description for Dawn Lassiter
Administrative Assistant to the Senior Pastor
January 17, 2007**

Our mission is to advance the kingdom of God by building relationships with God and others.

The administrative assistant serves by proactively managing the church office and supporting the pastor, providing every opportunity for the pastor and others to minister at maximum effectiveness in their area of ministry.

Qualifications

- Models Christian character
- Is a member of the church and attends Sunday church service and Wednesday evening study time regularly
- Has completed a background check

The person in this position will be an industrious, self-motivated, committed individual who shows initiative, is enthusiastic, and Spirit-led.

He or she will have the ability to

- Adapt to a changing work environment
- Anticipate what is needed and provide it
- Initiate and improve routines and procedures
- Accurately represent the pastor in his absence
- Use ingenuity to create solutions
- Remain calm and productive under pressure

Spiritual gifts required include administration, help, and service.

Basic Skills Needed Include

Daily

- Answer phones
- Greet people
- Send and respond to e-mail
- Process mail
- Oversee the pastor's schedule

Weekly

- Absentee follow-up
- Send visitors letters and response forms
- Back up computers
- Produce bulletin
- Compose correspondence
- Recruit and coordinate volunteers
- Prepare PowerPoint for Sunday
- Attend staff meeting
- Web site maintenance

Monthly

- Produce and distribute newsletter
- Complete task items from committee meetings
- Prepare for board meetings, including reports and reminders
- Directory updates
- Order supplies
- Update policy manual

THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S HANDBOOK

Annually

- Prepare year-end reports
- Complete nominating committee work
- Produce directory

As Needed

- Calendar coordinating
- Plan and prepare for special services
- Oversee equipment sign-out
- Key distribution
- Funeral, wedding, dedication, baptism preparation
- Order supplies

Special Projects

- Analyze results from telephone survey and prepare reports
- Sort archives

Compensation

Cash per month	\$2,000.00	
Health Care	\$ 80.00	
Group Insurance	\$ 245.00	
Other (403[b], etc.)	\$ 100.00	
	TC	\$2,425.00 monthly

Policy Arrangements

Hours of work are 9-4 Monday through Friday, and 6-9 Wednesday, with a half-hour paid lunch break and a one-hour unpaid supper break on Wednesday for a total of 38 hours per week.

Paid vacation will be two weeks per year following the first year of service. After five years of service, the paid vacation time will be three weeks per year. Three weeks paid vacation is the maximum vacation allowance for this position.

Calculation date—vacation days, sick days, and similar will be calculated on the church calendar year (May 1—April 30), with adjustments being made the first year.

Sick days—the employee will receive 2 paid sick days per month. These can be banked up to a maximum of 10 days but have no cash value.

Short-term and long-term disability—this benefit is provided in accordance with our health insurance policy.

Benevolent leave arrangements will be made in consultation with the senior pastor.

Mileage reimbursement—when using a personal vehicle for work, this employee will be reimbursed 20 cents per mile. The mileage reimbursement form will be submitted monthly.

Professional development—the employee may attend one professional development seminar per year to a maximum expense of \$200.00, including seminar cost, lodging, and meals, and will be paid for the days attending the seminar providing they are regular workdays. This allowance cannot be banked from one year to the next. The senior pastor may approve additional paid days to attend professional development seminars or conferences. In this event, the employee will pay the seminar or conference fee personally.

Constitutional statement—this agreement is subject to the constitutional agreements of our international church and government labor standards.

Profiling the Position

Employee's signature	Pastor's signature	Governing board/council chairperson's signature
Print name above	Print name above	Print name above
Date	Date	Date

JOB DESCRIPTION REVIEW

The job description should be reviewed three months after an employee has taken the position. In the initial review, it might be adapted to more realistically represent the requirements of the position and the skill set of the person you have hired.

Following the initial review, the job description should be reviewed annually. Reviewing the job description outside the setting where the duties are performed gives both the pastor and assistant the opportunity to provide feedback about the position in a nonthreatening way. Go through the description line by line to

- Eliminate tasks that are no longer required
- Add additional duties that are required or are being performed
- Talk about alternate methods of accomplishing goals that may be more effective or efficient
- Align vision

Reviewing the job description also provides a forum to ensure the administrative assistant has the opportunity for growth and skill development. It gives an occasion to evaluate if the assistant is working at full potential and in ways that maximize his or her God-given gifts.

In recent years I have been asked to teach at many seminars and workshops. Every single time I get queasy and panicky for hours before the event no matter how prepared I am. I pace and I perspire and I take my temperature to see if I'm coming down with typhoid or something else serious enough to get me out of it.

But when I stand to speak, I sense the Spirit of the Lord surround me. Past the hesitations and stuttering, God begins to speak. When I talk about God at work in the church office, there is a hush in the room and people get tears in their eyes. After the seminar, participants tell me God ministered to them. Isn't God something?

Here is my point. Observe your administrative assistant at work. How is God blessing his or her work? What is God doing through His servant? When you know that, you will know how to edit the job description.