

CHURCH OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Medium-sized church (250-600 in average worship attendance)

Generic job description

Of the seven motivational gifts listed in Romans 12, three are most important for a church office staff: compassion (for the receptionist), serving (for secretarial responsibilities), and administration (for staff management and developing/improving systems and processes). By the time a church has two office staff workers, all three gifts need to be present. Fortunately, it is common for people to have two of these gifts (compassion/serving is a common combination, as is administration/serving).

When the second office staff person is added, it is important to assign duties according to gifts. Generally, the person with a primary gift of compassion should serve as receptionist with additional secretarial duties (those that can be easily interrupted, given the nature of the receptionist's work). The person with the gift of administration should serve as office administrator, also doing secretarial work.

The nature and scope of an office administrator's job varies with the size of the church and the professional skills, gifts, and interests of the office administrator. This generic job description defines common functions of an office administrator. Each actual job description should be customized to the individual being hired to reflect skills, gifts, and interests.

QUALIFICATIONS

Character

- Passionate love for God and the church.
- Evidences growth toward Christlikeness. Good reputation.
- Dependable. Keeps commitments. Punctual. Completes work on time except for occasional unforeseen emergencies.
- Can be trusted to keep sensitive information in strict confidence.

Chemistry

- *Shared values:* Fully embraces the mission, vision, and values of the church and pastoral staff (to the extent these have been clarified).
- *Trusted:* Has earned the implicit trust of the staff members whom he or she will be personally assisting.
- *Collaborative:* Gets along well with other staff. Takes initiative to address conflicts within staff promptly. Good at devising win/win solutions.

Competencies

- *Empowering manager.* Has this person supervised others, either employees or volunteers, and done so effectively? Does she or he build cohesive teams, increasing collaboration and effectiveness of the teams he or she leads? Is he or she an empowering leader, enabling team members to operate in the areas of their gifts and passions? Do others consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to work on a team led by this person? (Caution: To determine the answers to these questions, it is not enough to ask the interviewee. You must either have been able to observe the person in action as a team leader, or you must interview people who have worked under this person's leadership as employee or volunteer.)
- *Servant spirit.* A primary role of the office staff is to free pastors and other equipping staff to spend their time equipping and to empower volunteer ministry leaders in the church by providing office support for their ministries. An effective office administrator will constantly be looking for tasks being done by equipping staff that could better be done by office staff, and will coach equipping staff in how to more effectively delegate.
- *Self-starter.* Sees what needs to be done and takes initiative without waiting for assignment of individual tasks.
- *Systems thinker.* Constantly develops ways to create more efficient and effective systems to increase team productivity.
- *At home with computers; eager to learn.* The office administrator must be very comfortable with computers. Being able and willing to learn new software quickly is more important than having experience with all the specific software programs used in the church office. This does not, however, mean that the office administrator will regularly work in all software programs. For example, if the office administrator is more creative than analytical, she may serve as webmaster and graphic designer, but not do any accounting. If the office administrator is more analytical than creative, he may do bookkeeping, but not graphic design. Exactly which computer-related tasks the office administrator owns will depend on the skills, gifts, and interests of the person.
- *Effective communicator.* Communicates effectively both orally and in writing. Has good working knowledge of grammar and strong business writing skills.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- *Manage office staff.* The office administrator oversees the work of all other office staff--receptionists, secretaries, bookkeepers, etc. This may also include supervision of contract workers who work outside the office such as newsletter editors, graphic designers, webmasters, etc. This includes the responsibility to cultivate strong teamwork through ensuring that work assignments are aligned with gifts and interests, through coaching and encouragement, through facilitating healthy group decision-making and group cooperation on projects.
- *Manage facility staff.* In a medium-sized church, the office administrator supervises the facility staff (custodial/maintenance staff and/or cleaning service). The office administrator either maintains the building schedule to coordinate set-up/tear-down and cleaning with facility staff, or delegates this responsibility to another office staff member. (In a large church, a Facility Manager will typically supervise the facility staff, and will report to a Business Manager, Director of Operations, or Executive Pastor/Director.)
- *Coach equipping staff on delegation.* The office administrator will work with each equipping staff member to identify tasks the equipping staff member is doing that can be delegated to equipping staff, and will coach equipping staff in how to make full use of the services of the office support staff.
- *Develop/improve office systems and procedures.* The office administrator is responsible to identify ways that efficiency and effectiveness in office operations can be improved and to lead in implementing changes.
- *Purchase /lease and maintain office equipment and services.* The office administrator has primary responsibility to research office equipment and to purchase or lease tools that will maximize staff productivity: computers and peripherals, copiers, telephone systems, folding machines, postage meters, etc. Also, the office administrator has primary responsibility for equipment service contracts and arranging for maintenance and repairs for equipment. If the office manager does not have expertise in all these areas, he/she should solicit advice from those who do have such expertise. The office administrator should have the authority to enter into purchase, lease, and service contracts without seeking specific approval for each contract provided the contract is within the approved budget for office operations. (If you don't feel your office administrator is qualified to make these decisions, that probably means you hired the wrong person.)
- *Coordinate work of facility maintenance/repair professionals.* In small churches, this is usually handled by volunteers--trustees or a building and grounds committee, or sometimes the pastor. In large churches (starting at 600 to 800) this is typically handled by a facility manager. For the medium-sized church, it often works best for the office administrator to handle the scheduling of maintenance visits and to work with service/repair professionals.

- *Perform certain regular secretarial/communications functions based on skills, gifts, and interests.* Like every other member of the office staff, the office administrator will have certain office tasks that are part of his/her regular job description, depending on his/her skills, gifts, and interests. Some possibilities (not a complete list) include:
 - # *Administrative assistant.* The office administrator often serves as the administrative assistant for one or more members of the equipping staff. While certain tasks can be assigned by the Office Administrator to whomever is able and available, it is generally a good idea for each pastor and ministry director to have one office support person who is assigned to him/her to serve as an administrative assistant.
 - # *IT.* If the office administrator has the skills to handle your information technology, servicing your computers and networking, that is a big plus in the medium-size church.
 - # *Communications/graphic design.* Being a good graphic designer requires artistic talent, not just an ability to learn software. If the office administrator is talented at graphic design and enjoys this work, it makes sense for this to be a part of this person's job description. Otherwise, this can be assigned to another member of the office staff who has these skills, or it can be outsourced. The most common design tasks are the weekly worship bulletin and inserts, newsletter, flyers, posters, PowerPoint announcements and sermon slides, worship video/slides. The same person would not usually handle all these responsibilities, but the office administrator might handle some and oversee those doing others.
 - # *Accounting.* In some churches, the office administrator also handles financial accounting. In others, another staff member handles this. In churches of less than 300, it is not uncommon for this to be handled by a part-time person who works mostly from a home computer. If the office manager does not do accounting, he/she will supervise the person who does do it and arrange for someone else to cover it when the bookkeeper is on vacation or otherwise unavailable.
 - # *Web site management.* If the office administrator has website management skills, he/she can serve as webmaster. Otherwise, the office administrator typically has oversight of the webmaster who may be another office staff member, a contract worker, or a volunteer. Since the church web site needs to be updated with calendar and event information several times a week, it is important that the web site be set up so that office staff can update information easily, even if the webmaster does not work in the church office.

Option for broader job description: Church Administrator

In some medium-size churches, the gift of administration that the office administrator brings is just as needed on the equipping staff as it is on the office staff. In such a situation, if the person demonstrates the spiritual maturity and professional competence to serve on the equipping staff, it can work well to create a “hybrid” position that is half office administrator and half ministry administrator. This hybrid position is sometimes called Church Administrator.

In the ministry administrator role, this person is a member of the equipping staff and meets with the equipping staff for ministry evaluation and planning. Just as other equipping staff would be responsible for specific ministries, this person would be assigned oversight of specific ministries, based on gifts and passion. The leaders of one or more ministry teams might report to this person, just as the leaders of each ministry team are assigned to report to a staff coach. Also, the ministry administrator can partner with pastors and other equipping staff to handle the administrative components of ministry events, going well beyond office work to handling a wide range of logistics for events or programs.