
GROWTH POINTS

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Working with a Secretary

Working with a secretary is integral to the smooth functioning of a church. However, most pastors have never learned to work effectively with a secretary, as it's not something taught in Bible school or seminary.

So, the following are some basic insights to get you started.

First, Understand the Role

- **Define Responsibilities:** Clearly outline the secretary's duties, which may include managing schedules, handling correspondence, organizing meetings, and maintaining records.
- **Set Expectations:** Communicate your expectations regarding work hours, availability, and deadlines. This helps avoid misunderstandings and ensures you are on the same page.
- **Empower Decision-Making:** Allow your secretary to make certain decisions independently. This fosters trust and efficiency, freeing you to focus on more critical tasks.

Second: Communicate Daily

- **Regular Check-ins:** Schedule consistent meetings to discuss ongoing projects, upcoming tasks, and any issues. This keeps both of you aligned and informed.

- **Open Door Policy:** Encourage your secretary to communicate openly about concerns, suggestions, or feedback.
- **Clear Instructions:** Provide clear and concise instructions for tasks. Ambiguity can lead to errors and wasted time, so ensure your directions are easy to follow.

Third: Utilize Technology

- **Shared Calendars:** Use digital tools like shared calendars to keep track of appointments and deadlines. This ensures both parties are aware of each other's schedules.
- **Project Management Tools:** Implement project management software to streamline task assignments and monitor progress.
- **Communication Platforms:** Use platforms like Slack or Microsoft Teams for quick and efficient communication.

Fourth: Foster Development

- **Training Opportunities:** Encourage your secretary to attend workshops, seminars, or courses that enhance their skills.
- **Feedback and Recognition:** Provide constructive feedback on their efforts and achievements. Recognition boosts morale and motivates improvement.
- **Career Growth:** Discuss long-term career goals and opportunities for advancement to build loyalty.

Fifth: Build a Good Working Relationship

- **Respect and Trust:** Show respect for your secretary's time, skills, and opinions. Trust is built over time and is crucial for a productive working relationship.
- **Team Spirit:** Create a sense of teamwork and collaboration. Recognize that both your roles are essential.
- **Personal Connection:** Take the time to understand your secretary's strengths, weaknesses, and working style. A personal connection enhances communication and cooperation.

Sixth: Prioritize Work

- **Prioritization:** Help your secretary prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance. Effective prioritization ensures that critical tasks are completed on time.
- **Documentation:** Encourage meticulous documentation of meetings, decisions, and communications. Good records are needed for reference and accountability.
- **Time Management:** Assist your secretary in managing their time efficiently. This might include tips on setting realistic deadlines.

Seventh: Resolve Conflict

- **Address Issues Promptly:** When conflicts arise, address them

immediately to prevent escalation. Open communication is vital in resolving misunderstandings.

- **Mediation Skills:** Develop mediation skills to handle disagreements professionally. Finding a middle ground that satisfies both parties is key to maintaining harmony.
- **Learn from Conflicts:** Use conflicts as learning opportunities to improve processes and communication. Reflecting on these situations can prevent future issues.

Eighth: Encourage Initiative

- **Proactive Approach:** Encourage your secretary to take the initiative in identifying and solving problems, as it will save time and resources.
- **Idea Sharing:** Create an environment where your secretary feels comfortable sharing ideas. Innovation often comes from collaboration and diverse perspectives.
- **Responsibility and Ownership:** Assign responsibilities that allow your secretary to take ownership of tasks. This allows for a sense of accountability and pride in their work.

Using these ideas will increase your effectiveness in working with a secretary. But, it's only a start. Talk to others—secretaries and leaders—who've worked together. Ask them to share insights on working well together.

Remember, a well-supported secretary is an invaluable asset to any leadership team.

Growth Points is published twelve times a year. Individual subscription is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. Executive subscribers for wide distribution available for \$150 (US Funds) per year.

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