

## “SELECTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE” Dave Kraft

Over the last several weeks, I have been doing a lot of thinking about the importance of picking the right people. No decision, it seems to me, has more long-range consequences than having the wisdom to invite the right people to be among those closest to me. In my role as a leader developer, I am always observing people as to future potential because I believe that one of the most important jobs of a leader is spotting, recruiting and developing the next generation of leaders.

Mark 3:13 (The Message) says, “He climbed a mountain and invited those he wanted with him. They climbed together.” Later on, after this situation, Jesus spent a whole night in prayer and made His selection as to those who would be His apostles, His chosen ones.

In Acts 1:24 the need was perceived to select someone to take Judas’ place. “Then they prayed, ‘Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen’.” (NIV) The eleven understood two things:

1. Only God knew the hearts of those who were candidates for leadership
2. They needed God’s help to make a good choice

As we read about Paul in the book of Acts and as he counsels Timothy and Titus in his letters to them, picking good leaders is always on the front burner.

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the thing that can maximize the ongoing effectiveness and fruitfulness of God’s ministry through me, making it a joy and not a headache, is having the right people around me. I need to be extremely prayerful and careful in making these choices.

In addition to being a pastor for community group ministry at my church here in Seattle, I coach pastors around the country.

One of the issues that surfaces on a weekly basis is the need for God’s wisdom in selecting people to be part of the leadership team. There are a lot of bad situations in many churches due to not making good choices regarding key players. Often, the wrong people are on the team or they are in the wrong role.

I caution leaders against picking key players on the basis of friendship, business success, or popularity, but rather making choices based on the person’s innate God-given ability to do what needs to be done coupled with appropriate people skills so as to be a positive and contributing team member.

I find that pastors and leaders move much too fast and don't do their homework before inviting leaders into the inner circle. Several pastors I know have been set back for months due to poor choices that caused one problem after another. I find myself telling my coaching clients over and over again: Pray, get the counsel of others, take your time, don't be in a hurry, interview them several times, ask good questions, look at the character issues, look at their people skills, don't get fooled by fancy talkers and winsome personalities.

Jim Collins in his book, "Good to Great" has some excellent insight when he suggests that we "get the right people on the bus and in the right seats." I have begun to think in terms of two stages:

1. Inviting the right people to get on the team bus based on **character and chemistry**
2. Getting the right people in the right seats on the team bus based on **competency and Capacity**

Let's explore these two.

1. Inviting the *right people* to get on the team bus with you

I believe there are general characteristics that are foundational regardless of the role a person might play on the team. Among these essential character traits would be: A vital, deep and growing walk with Jesus, integrity, faithfulness, follow-through, hard-working, philosophical, missional and doctrinal alignment, good chemistry with the rest of the team. You get the idea.

2. Getting the people in the *right seats* on the team bus

In his excellent book, "First Break All The Rules," Marcus Buckingham offers this advice, " If you want to turn talent into performance, you have to position each person so that you are paying her to do what she is naturally wired to do. You have to cast her in the right role."

You bring key people with proven character and track records of faithfulness, and work ethic and then you place them in roles that fit their God-given talent. You don't place people based on promise or potential but based on proven performance so that you know what they are gifted to do and have already done.

That is why, if possible, it is always best to "hire from within" so you know what a person can and has done rather than what they tell you they think they can do. The surest way to identify each person's talent is to watch his/her behavior over time. You cannot bring out of a person what God has not built in.

You don't train for talent, you hire for talent. All the training in the world won't change a person's God-given DNA or help them be somebody God never intended. A person who just doesn't think in detail, and never has, will never have this as a strength and should not be in a role where that is a major expectation. Oh, the issues I have dealt with where the leader cannot understand why so and so just doesn't get it or can't learn XYZ. It ain't in the genes. Move them into a role that taps into who God made them. Marcus Buckingham says, "People don't change that much. Don't waste your time trying to put in what was left out. Try to draw out what was left in. That is hard enough."

I encourage, implore you, as a leader, to take your time in selecting key people for your leadership inner circle. Look for vibrancy in their walk with Jesus and hard-working person of strong character. Once you select them to join you for your visionary trip, take the time to make sure what you ask them to do fits who God made them to be then sit back and look forward to a great trip.