

Christa Reinhardt:

Welcome to the Vanderbloemen Leadership podcast. I'm your host, Christa Reinhardt, Senior Marketing Coordinator here at Vanderbloemen.

Christa Reinhardt:

Today, we will be continuing episode four and our current series New Year, New Rhythms, where we walk through what you can expect to change in the New Year and how you can prepare for those changes. In this week's episode, you will hear from two of our executive search consultants, Tim Gocha and Eric Albert, as they discuss the search process and how a committee can perform a successful search. This is a critical conversation for church and ministry leaders needing to fill a leadership position soon. Without further ado, here's our conversation on new search processes.

Christa Reinhardt:

Well, hey, everybody. Thank you so much for joining me again for episode four of our series today. I'm joined by Tim Gocha, our VP of Consulting. Hi, Tim.

Tim Gocha:

Hi, Christa. Good to be with you.

Christa Reinhardt:

Thanks for being here.

Tim Gocha:

Sure.

Christa Reinhardt:

And then also I have Eric Albert, our Executive Search Consultant. Hello, Eric.

Eric Albert:

Hello.

Christa Reinhardt:

Well, thank you guys for joining me today as we are going to walk through our process of what the consultants do here at Vanderbloemen and kind of sharing some tips for people who are on these search committees walking through this new process.

Tim Gocha:

Sure.

Christa Reinhardt:

Great. Let's go ahead and just get started, if you want to walk me through what the search consultants do here at Vanderbloemen, what that looks like.

Eric Albert:

Yeah. So part of what we do is we get to be the face of the company as we work with clients.

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Eric Albert:

And so a lot of that means that we'll go in person. We'll try to figure out just the DNA...

Christa Reinhardt:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eric Albert:

... Of who they are, who comes there, what they're looking for, and really try to narrow it down of the filters that we're going to run candidates through to help them find somebody that fits with them. Doesn't just have a good resume.

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Eric Albert:

But fits culturally theologically, any kind of nuances with them.

Christa Reinhardt:

That's wonderful. And then kind of building off of that, you made a really good point that we've been talking about a lot lately, specifically on marketing. We've been talking about what it is we really do. We've been going through a branding thing. We've talked a lot about kind of, you said the word DNA, we've talked about the unique needs of a church. I think y'all work with so many different churches, denominations, sizes. And so you really have to get there. And that's why we value being in person to get the DNA of the church to find a good match for them. So that's awesome.

Eric Albert:

Mmm hmm.

Christa Reinhardt:

And then kind of building on that search team, because I know you work alongside the search teams. What does that look like and who should serve on these search teams at churches?

Tim Gocha:

Great question. So, a really valuable search team is one, just like we just been talking about the DNA of the church. They have to be the DNA of the church. I like to say that they need skin in the game. And so you need people that are, I think, actively involved in the church. You also need people that know the church inside and out, whether it's a single campus or a multi-site, they need knowledge of the operations. They need knowledge of the ministries of the church.

Tim Gocha:

Obviously they also need to be very familiar with the search itself and the position that they're going to be searching for. So we love to see search teams that have a diversity on them, a thought, people that are coming from different walks of life, different ages, different demographics, different backgrounds, serving on the team, but with the one common goal of really discerning God's will and what God is saying in them about the next position that we're going to fill.

Tim Gocha:

So somebody with skin in the game, somebody that's very familiar with the church, somebody also has the time to, to give to this. Yeah, they have the first, probably eight to 10 weeks, not so much, but when the consultant comes back to the church and we present candidates to them, it's go time for that search team. And the next several weeks can be very, very invasive of time and it can be very, very critical to the life of the search itself and finally hiring the right staff member.

Christa Reinhardt:

That's great. I like how you mentioned that it's almost where you hand the baton over and it's on them to get through that.

Tim Gocha:

Very much.

Christa Reinhardt:

And then as far as kind of, say if I was on that search team, I think I would be wondering, what do we look for when we're interviewing those candidates, once you hand over and you bring those to me, what do we look for in that?

Eric Albert:

Yeah. So even from the very beginning, we'll walk a search team through kind of what those next steps look like, just so that they start mentally preparing for them. Even as we get closer to presentation, we try to help gear them up. We'll share some best practices with them of open-ended questions, not just yes or no questions, but tell me the time. Tell me about how did you do this, to really for them to be able to get to know candidates, not just hear kind of what their plan is, but hear their heart kind of their mindset behind the ministry that they've been leading.

Tim Gocha:

Yeah, I don't, this is probably isn't new to our listening audience today, but we're really looking, I'm looking for four different things. We're looking for the competency of the candidate, what is their experience? What is their background? We're looking for potential cultural fits. Somebody that lives in one regional area of the country may not do well in another area of the country.

Tim Gocha:

And then the city and the town itself where the church is located or the organization is located is very important. And the other thing is the character, right? And we could tell a lot by talking to them, just like Eric said, open-ended questions are a great way to kind of vet that out a little bit. The last piece is the trickiest and that's the chemistry fit, right?

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

And so we're always concerned about that. And we're always trying to vet that out, but that's something that we really count on the client, the church, the client church to, or the organization to help us out with is that a chemistry fit.

Christa Reinhardt:

That's great. And so right now I feel like this is a common question that you're probably seeing with the job market being really crazy. I talked to the recruiters not too long ago about this kind of stuff. And I feel like a lot of churches are wondering why we lose great candidates or they get their heart set on a candidate and then they go a different way.

Eric Albert:

And we see people lose candidates for a number of different reasons. Some is because they take a job someplace else and clients just have to remember if they're a good candidate for you they're a good candidate for someplace else. And sometimes it's really not being able to communicate what next steps will be. And it makes candidates just a little bit nervous, unsure if they're really interested. So it's really about continuing to recruit them and win them over and not just them, but also their spouse.

Christa Reinhardt:

Yeah. That's a great point. Especially if they're making these moves to different places, that's a big commitment. And then kind of building more on search, let's talk more about search or search committees. What kind of mistakes, because y'all are the ones, we call you guys our road warriors because y'all go out, you see, you're working with churches every week, organizations. What are the mistakes that you see often in this process?

Tim Gocha:

Well, I think we just alluded to the fact that candidates have more options now than they have in a long time, right?

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

And so the idea of presenting next steps to the candidates as you're talking to them and as the organization is vetting them out, keep things moving along. Let them know what next steps are. That could be via text or it could be email or however you want to do that. You need to tell them next steps.

Christa Reinhardt:

Communication.

Tim Gocha:

Communication is absolutely vital.

Tim Gocha:

And I think the other thing to is that most search teams, they have grown up in the church. They've been there for a long time. So they already love the church.

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

They already know the DNA of the church, so you don't have to sell them. But what you do need to do is do a little bit of recruiting along the way. Let them know, let the candidate know why this is a great place to serve. Let them know the vision, let them know that them coming there, they would love the area, they would love the organization and they would do well. So don't be afraid to recruit along the way.

Christa Reinhardt:

No, that's great. I think we, a lot of places forget about that, especially.

Tim Gocha:

They do.

Christa Reinhardt:

If you've been in the church forever, you know how great it is, but communicating that to them as well is great.

Tim Gocha:

Right.

Christa Reinhardt:

Wonderful. And then as far as kind of the other side that we talked about mistakes or things to keep in mind. What kind of tips do you have for a search committee? Tips or even like, what have you seen done well with the search committee?

Eric Albert:

I think part of it is that sometimes search committees feel like they need to have all the answers before they get started. And it's really not about that. It's about, let's have a roadmap and let's be able to go down and we know that there's going to be some things that we're going to have to answer as we get there. And so maybe we'll deal with it right before, but we don't have to have all the answers before we launch because otherwise we'll never launch. We'll never have all the answers. And so it's really kind of know yourself, know what we're looking for. It may not be what we initially thought that we were going to be looking for. So we always tell them, hey, be flexible because in this room we're going to disagree and I'd rather see you disagree because then I know everyone's speaking up and everyone's voice is being heard.

Christa Reinhardt:

And you're hearing from different people and different perspectives. That's great.

Tim Gocha:

I think one of the other areas is that sometimes search teams are looking for the person that has 10, 15 years of experience.

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

And some of the best candidates that we come across, they have less experience. Maybe they have three to seven years of experience, but they've been in high level positions with ever increasing responsibility. They're ready to take their next step. And when you stop to think about it, a less experienced candidate sometimes is more teachable, more moldable. They come in with a tremendous amount of ability and leadership capacity. And I think that as the organization and the individual that is hired as they, they can grow together.

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

So it's not somebody that has hit peak. It's somebody that is reaching forward and reaching upward. And sometimes they're the best candidates because they are teachable, they are moldable and they're easy to work with. So I think we overlook that sometimes.

Christa Reinhardt:

No, that's great. That's wonderful. I like how you mentioned they grow, the growing aspect of that. We talked about that. I think William was saying the other day of we have with all the turnover and the change recently and all the transitions of jobs we're seeing right now, we've even had several new people joining our team. And so he's talked a lot about the growth and the opportunity for us to grow together throughout this season. And I think that goes for anytime you're looking for a new leader. And then let about the spiritual aspect of this. So let's talk about where God fits into this process, what that looks like.

Eric Albert:

Yeah. I think that sometimes for search teams or committees, that they really struggle with hiring a firm because they think, oh, now we've taken God out of this. And, and so...

Christa Reinhardt:

Corporate.

Eric Albert:

Yeah. So we definitely want to be able to partner with them, not just to be able to talk about the spiritual aspect, but be able to pray with them, pray for whoever this person is and their family that God has picked. They just don't know it yet. And then even on our end that there's times we get to talk with candidates, pray with them when we're done talking, there have been times where candidates have prayed for me before we leave. We've met someplace and had coffee and...

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Eric Albert:

They'll just say, can I pray for you before you go? And so I love to see how God's hand is moving. And a lot of times we don't even know it, but it's all moving at the same time to be able to line up for his timing.

Christa Reinhardt:

That's wonderful.

Tim Gocha:

So one of the things that Eric alluded to is that we're there to build relationships. It's amazing that through the life of a search, the relationships that we're able to build with the organization and the relationship that we built with the candidate.

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

One thing we've discovered is there's always a miss, there's always something missing on either side of the equation. There's always a brokenness. There's always a tension to be managed. And as a Christian organization, we ultimately know that God's in control and he's sovereign. And so we've coached them along the area that, I think a couple things. Number one, we believe God's timing is perfect.

Christa Reinhardt:

Always.

Tim Gocha:

Right? His clock never is behind. It's never ahead. And so we have to trust the process. We have to understand that prayer works and we can trust God because he knows who he has already hand selected for this organization.

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

So it's really important. It's important that we remind the church of that or the organization of that simply because we don't want them to get discouraged along the way, and we're going to work hard at this, but we're going to trust that God is going to present at the candidate, right?

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

And it's just our responsibility to listen to the whispers of God and to do our hard work.

Christa Reinhardt:

That's awesome. That's wonderful. I love hearing that. And I think I hear a lot of the God stories from you guys who get to go out and be there. And I think that's one of our favorite things on Friday meetings. We have consultant on the road and someone always shares a story. And it's usually some kind of encouraging story about the organization they worked with their church or how they saw God this week. And so that's really great that we get to hear that and celebrate that together here as well.

Tim Gocha:

Yeah.

Christa Reinhardt:

And that this is kind of our glimpse of kingdom work.

Tim Gocha:

Absolutely.

Christa Reinhardt:

On this side of our ministry.

Tim Gocha:

It's exciting.

Christa Reinhardt:

That's awesome. Well, as we're kind of wrapping up, one thing we've been asking everyone is since it is the New Year, we're talking resolutions, so what are your resolutions for the New Year's?

Eric Albert:

Well, so probably originally I wanted to become a beekeeper this year, but my wife has said we are not doing that. And so...

Christa Reinhardt:

That's a bummer.

Eric Albert:



So I like to read while I'm on the road. And so I'll probably try to set a goal of a hundred books this year, read a hundred books. And...

Christa Reinhardt:

Do you have a new goal of books every year?

Eric Albert:

Yeah. So this past year was 50 books of...

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Eric Albert:

Was 50 books that were super meaningful. And now I just like to read sometimes just for enjoyment.

Christa Reinhardt:

That's awesome.

Tim Gocha:

Wow. I wish I had Eric's resolution.

Eric Albert:

And the beekeeping.

Tim Gocha:

I'm sure about the beekeeping...

Christa Reinhardt:

Into the office for us...

Tim Gocha:

Maybe the book studies, right? I don't know that I'm as studious as Eric is. I think one of the resolutions for me, you just called us a road warrior. Consultants are on the road a lot. I think one of the things for me is to continue to stay physically and spiritually fit. Being on the road, you don't always get to eat the home cooked meal. You don't always sleep in your same bed, right? So I think keeping physically fit and taking care of ourselves is really, really important. I think the other side is the spiritual aspect.

Christa Reinhardt:

Right.

Tim Gocha:

Going into, and working with folks and working with candidates, there is a spiritual aspect to that. So I think one of my resolutions is also to be that kind of a person who will listen more than he talks.

Christa Reinhardt:

Oh, that's good.

Tim Gocha:

And listen, and then give that Sage advice if you can, at the end of that conversation. But to have that listening ear, I think is really, really important. So, not as big as Eric's.

Christa Reinhardt:

Yeah, he has a hundred books over there.

Eric Albert:

And how about you? What is your...

Christa Reinhardt:

So I was just telling you guys before this, I'm horrible at resolutions, but as I'm entering 2022, I'm entering a new life stage. I'll be getting married in about five months. And so I've been trying to think a lot of in the next five months, what do I want to kind of accomplish. And one of the things I keep thinking of is healthy habits. And so building habits now that I can bring into this next life stage of spiritual habits and reading and health habits and water and food and just...

Tim Gocha:

Beekeeping.

Christa Reinhardt:

Beekeeping. All of the things. So that's kind of something I'm going to be working on over the next few months.

Tim Gocha:

That's awesome.

Christa Reinhardt:

Great. Well, thank you guys so much for joining me today and thank you everybody who is listening, don't forget to join us next week on the next episode.

Christa Reinhardt:

Thanks for tuning in. We hope this conversation and series will show you a glimpse of the kingdom work that we have the privilege of being part. Keep tuning in to hear We've Seen God Move and learn tips for walking through each part of the hiring process. If you don't want to miss any upcoming episodes of New Year, New Rhythms, make sure to subscribe to the Vanderbloemen leadership podcast, wherever you listen to podcasts.