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Discernment Guide

Using the *Self-Identified Profile*[®]
and *Vital Signs*[®] to Explore Fit

Search Committee Edition

Discernment Guide

Using the *Self-Identified Profile*® and *Vital Signs*® to Explore Fit

The First Integrated System of Congregational and Clergy Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to help search committees and clergy candidates explore their potential “fit” through the information found in the *Vital Signs*® report generated from the Church Assessment Tool® and the *Self-Identified Profile*® generated from the Passion-Effectiveness Tool®.

The method used in this exploration should be conversational. Neither of these instruments is designed to be a screening tool that eliminates the need for conversation. Together they offer an opportunity to focus the conversation in a way that provides more clarity to the discernment process.

Key Concepts

This Discernment Guide is designed around four basic ideas.

First, the process through which the call to a particular candidate is discerned should include a consideration of fit, that is, whether the unique qualities of the person will help a particular church advance its mission.

Second, no single person can be equally strong in every area of a church’s ministry. God has created each person with their own unique set of gifts.

Third, a person is most effective in areas where they are both effective *and* passionate. As people, we do best in work that not only fits what we are good at doing, but also what we love doing.

Fourth, the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. The most reliable indicator of what we will love doing well in the future is what we have loved doing well in the past.

Process

The Passion-Effectiveness Tool® is designed to be offered to candidates prior to their first interview with a search committee. The first interview may take place in person or on the phone.

Candidates are asked to take the Passion-Effectiveness Tool® in an exchange of information where the church will share their *Vital Signs*® report and the candidate will share his or her *Self-Identified Profile*®. In order to reduce the risk of skewing the responses, the candidate should not see the *Vital Signs*® report prior to taking the Passion-Effectiveness Tool®.

In preparation for the interview, the candidate should be offered this Discernment Guide to prepare for the conversation. The free exchange of information is designed to make every one as comfortable as possible in the process.

I. Clarity of Gift

The Clarity of Gift score measures the degree to which the responses of the candidate enable the Passion Effectiveness Tool[®] to distinguish areas of motivation and strength from other areas where he or she is less motivated or less effective. When responses to all questions are uniform, it suggests that the candidate sees himself or herself as strong in all areas, average in all areas, or weak in all the areas that are measured. When results in the *Self-Identified Profile*[®] are unclear, the Search Committee will need to find an alternative means of exploring the gifts and weaknesses of the candidate and how these fit with the particular church.

The Clarity of Gift score for this candidate is

- Very Clear
- Moderately Clear
- Unclear

Exploration Questions

If the candidate's score is Very Clear or Moderately Clear,

How have you become clear about what you love doing and do well in contrast to what you don't enjoy as much?

How would you go about helping members of the church become clear about their own gifts?

If the candidate's score is Unclear,

The Passion-Effectiveness Tool is unable to distinguish reliably between areas you love doing and do well from those you don't enjoy as much. What are some other ways we could identify the things you do well and enjoy doing?

II. Emerging Priorities

The Emerging Priorities indicate what a candidate is most likely to focus on accomplishing. These should be compared with the Priorities from the *Vital Signs*[®] report.

| The Candidate's Top Priorities (Scored a 6) | The Church's Top Priorities (from <i>VitalSigns</i> [®]) |
|---|--|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | |
| 6. | |

Exploration Questions

What priorities do you (the candidate) and the church have in common?

How would you go about addressing these shared priorities?

What is on your priority is on your list but not the church's?

What makes these important to you?

What is a top priority for the church but not for you?

How would you go about addressing these priorities?

The church is not ready to invest more energy into the areas below. Are there any areas on this list where it is important for you to invest energy as you begin your ministry in this church?

The Church's Lowest Priorities (from *Vital Signs*®)

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
-

III. Transformational Qualities

A transformational quality is an aspect of a candidate's personality where he or she is both passionate and effective. It suggests the skills the candidate is likely to employ in going about his or her work. The combination of passion and effectiveness makes it likely that the candidate will employ these qualities in addressing the church's priorities. When the candidate is working in the areas below, it is likely that he or she will be energized and gain a sense of achievement.

| The Candidate's Transformational Qualities | | The Church's Index Scores (from <i>Vital Signs</i> ®) | |
|--|------------|---|-------------------------|
| Category | Task/Trait | Index | Percentile Rank |
| | | | Hospitality |
| | | | Morale |
| | | | Conflict Management |
| | | | Governance |
| | | | Spiritual Vitality |
| | | | Readiness for Ministry |
| | | | Engagement in Education |
| | | | Worship and Music |

Exploration Questions

What priorities do you (the candidate) and the church have in common?

How would you go about addressing these priorities?

What is on your priority is on your list but not the church's? What makes these important to you?

What is a top priority for the church but not for you?

How would you go about addressing these priorities?

IV. Distinctive Characteristics

A Distinctive Characteristic is a capacity that distinguishes the candidate from his or her peer group. It is likely that one or more of these Distinctive Characteristics is also on the list of Transformational Qualities. On the other hand a Distinctive Characteristic may not be what the candidate does *best* or is *most* excited about, but he or she may still be effective in this area particularly in *comparison with other clergy*.

The Candidate's Distinctive Characteristics

Category

Task/Trait

Exploration Questions

The Self Identified Profile® indicates that you may have strengths in the areas above that may be distinctive compared with other clergy. How have you experienced or used these strengths in the past?

How important are these strengths in your ministry?

How do you see yourself using these strengths in the future?

V. Short Circuits

A short circuit is an area of work that is likely to drain the energy from the candidate and produce little sense of achievement. If this candidate is asked to work solely or primarily in the areas of the tasks/traits below, it is possible that he or she will experience a significant decrease in motivation, morale, and self-worth.

| The Candidate's Short Circuits | | The Church's Index Scores (from <i>Vital Signs</i> ®) | |
|--------------------------------|------------|---|-----------------|
| Category | Task/Trait | Index | Percentile Rank |
| | | Hospitality | |
| | | Morale | |
| | | Conflict Management | |
| | | Governance | |
| | | Spiritual Vitality | |
| | | Readiness for Ministry | |
| | | Engagement in Education | |
| | | Worship and Music | |

Exploration Questions

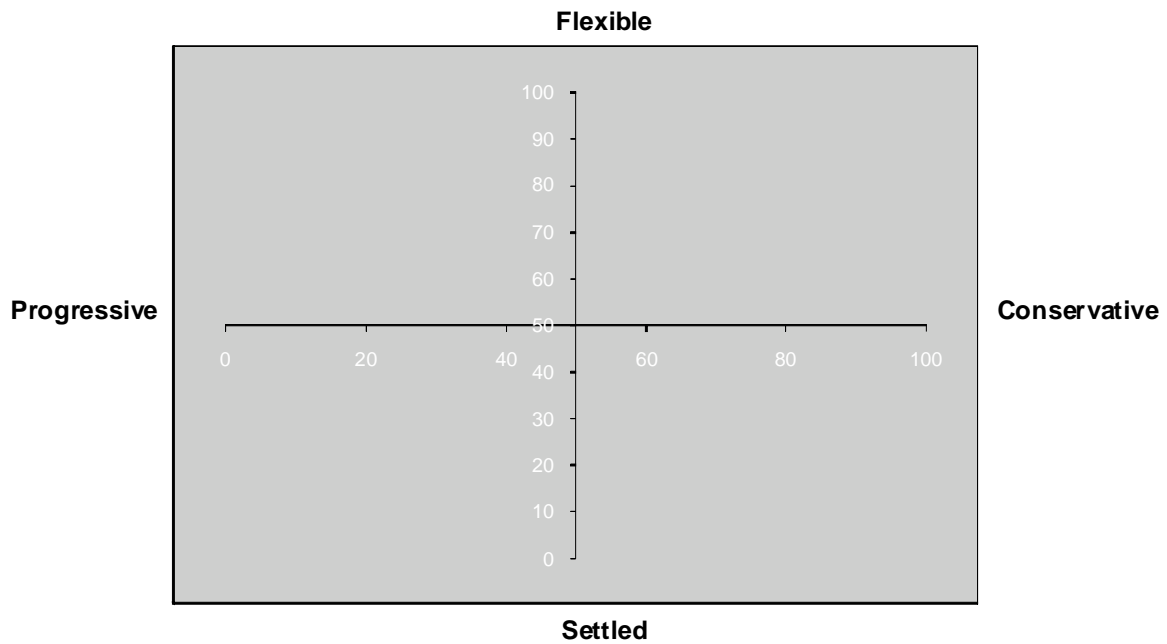
The Self Identified Profile® indicates that work in the areas above that may be difficult for you. What has been your experience in working in these areas?

From looking at the church's profile (Index Scores) how much difficulty would you have dealing with these areas?

How might you shape the leadership team to support you in areas where you are not as strong or motivated?

VI. Descriptive Style Map

This map indicates the particular style of a pastor or church using two characteristics. The first characteristic indicates theological perspective. The second characteristic indicates the level of flexibility in approach to church life. The combination of these two characteristics produces the four different possibilities for the overall style of a pastor or church. These are noted in the four quadrants of the map. Place two marks on this map, one for the candidate (from the *Self Identified Profile*®), and the second for the church (from the *Vital Signs*® report).



Exploration Questions

Understanding that the map is a very broad representation, does it basically represent the you and the church accurately? If not, move the marks to a location on the chart that is more accurate.

How far apart are you and the church from one another?

How might this difference or similarity impact your ministry in the church?