

Curriculum Guide for Presentations on:
Officer Roles, Responsibilities and Teamwork

- Goals:** 1) To understand the role that officer positions fill in Seventh-day Adventist Church organization
2) To know the range of officer responsibilities in Seventh-day Adventist Church organizational units
3) To comprehend and appreciate basic principles for achieving effective teamwork among officers of a denominational organization
4) To motivate a commitment to excellence in the leadership practices of officers in Seventh-day Adventist Church organizations

Points to cover:

1. Officer roles in Seventh-day Adventist Church organization
 - a. A position of spiritual leadership: Leadership in a voluntary and faith-based organization is different from corporate, government or military leadership. A leader in the Church practices leadership from the standpoint of service and empowering others. Biblical leadership is fundamentally different from worldly leadership. The Old Testament transforms a term of oppression, 'slave', into a title of honor, 'servant', one who promotes the interests and welfare of God. The exercise of spiritual leadership will involve several different practices: (Examples cited from the leadership of Jesus.)
 - i. Directing (Matt 10:5-10)
 - ii. Coaching (Matt 17:20)
 - iii. Supporting (Matt 14:31)
 - iv. Delegating (Matt 28:18-20)
 - b. A position of administrative function: (see list of responsibilities below_)
 - c. A position that officially and legally represents the organization (in the eyes of the law an officer can be held accountable for the action of an organization)
 - d. A position of accountability to a group(s)—executive committee/board and constituency/membership meeting
 - e. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has adopted a three-officer model of organizational leadership. Church leadership is based on a shared administration rather than a presidential system (see General Conference *Working Policy* D 05). This model avoids the spirit of kingly power. A three-officer arrangement reduces the likelihood of interpersonal conflict bringing an organization to a state of paralysis.
2. The range of officer responsibilities can be classified in six categories with examples of each as follows:
 - a. Personal responsibilities: for life, character and behavior
 - i. One's self-awareness before God
 - ii. Personal spiritual disciplines
 - iii. A personalized code of ethics
 - iv. Life in balance—administrative demands will constantly seek to create imbalance

- v. Dedication to learning—You do not have to prove yourself, but everyday you should improve yourself
- b. Regulatory responsibilities:
 - i. Maintain legal status of the organization (incorporated/unincorporated, etc.)
 - ii. Compliance with law/accrediting agency
 - iii. Property title and documentation
 - iv. Permits and authorizations
 - v. Building/environmental codes
 - vi. Official cycle of meetings
 - vii. Filing of periodic reports/updates
 - viii. Fulfillment of contracts/agreements
- c. Structural responsibilities:
 - i. Maintain relationships within denominational structure
 - ii. Exercise role of the organization in harmony with its status (local church, mission, conference, union, division, etc.)
 - iii. Comply with governance documents (constitution and bylaws/operating policy, GC/Div/Union/Conference Working Policy, Church Manual, etc.)
 - iv. Affirmation and advocacy of SDA Fundamental Beliefs
 - v. Internal distribution of responsibility and authority
 - vi. Well-defined officer job descriptions
- d. Procedural responsibilities:
 - i. Timely documentation of decisions
 - ii. Timely publication of reports
 - iii. Regular cycle of governance meetings
 - iv. Employment practices (just, legal)
 - v. Standard of care ('prudent person')
 - vi. Records retention system
 - vii. Risk management
- e. Management responsibilities:
 - i. Institutional oversight and supervision
 - ii. Supervision of persons directly reporting to the officer
 - iii. Appropriate employment practices
 - iv. Orientation of new employees
 - v. Program development/oversight
 - vi. Evaluation/assessment/accountability
 - vii. Analysis and strategic planning
 - viii. Calendar of events continually updated
 - ix. Leadership succession planning
- f. Cultural responsibilities:
 - i. Articulate mission, vision, values
 - ii. Build trust
 - iii. Empower others
 - iv. Make it safe to communicate
 - v. Celebrate global and local identity
 - vi. Establish and maintain credibility in the "tone-at-the-top"
 - vii. Demonstrating a service mentality
 - viii. Pursuing excellence in all areas of leadership life
 - ix. Building and maintaining a health workplace and a teamwork attitude

- x. Ensuring the ethical climate of the organization: integrity, respect, trust, fairness, etc.
 - xi. Manage conflicts of interest
 - xii. Make room for creativity, innovation, initiative, employee development
3. Building/maintaining a spirit of officer teamwork:
- a. Elements of teamwork:
 - i. Every position is necessary
 - ii. Each position has a specialized function
 - iii. Each participant must know the rules and procedures
 - iv. Team members must be in constant communication
 - v. Each team member does his/her best when there is mutual support and cooperation
 - b. Basic premise of TEAM **T**ogether
 Everyone
 Achieves
 More
 - c. The challenge of teamwork is to create a partnership that is complementary, productive, effective and satisfying
 - d. The importance of up-to-date job descriptions (reviewed together by officer team). The job descriptions in constitution and bylaws are woefully deficient as a basis for defining working relationships among officers.
 - e. Intentional designation and distribution of responsibilities
 - f. Respect for each officer's zone of authority/responsibility
 - g. Where officer responsibilities overlap or converge there is need for frequent consultation and communication (hence the need for a regular schedule of officer meetings)
 - h. Carefully observe boundaries of officer authority (in comparison with authority of Administrative Committee and/or Executive Committee/Board, etc.)
 - i. Teamwork climate requires loyalty to each other, confidentiality of sensitive information/discussions, along with timely and substantive communication
 - j. Resolve officer differences in private consultations. There are times when it is appropriate to inform executive committees/boards, etc. that the officers do not view a particular matter or proposal in the same way. In such situations officers can be given opportunity to express their varied viewpoints. But care must be exercised so that no impression is made concerning open conflict among officers.
 - k. Find time to associate as officers in informal settings outside the workplace.
4. Adopting a commitment to excellence: Excellence results from the complementary interrelationship of competency, conduct, and consistent quality of performance. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him." —2 Timothy 2:15 (NRSV)