Step Three: Integration

This can be the longest step of the process but it is very important – it's important for the person joining the team, it's important for the current members of the team, it's important for you as the worship pastor/director and it's important for your congregation. There are all kinds of ways to do this. We have not struck some magic formula, we've just found a way that we're happy with and that works for us.

This is where your process is going to diverge from mine because how this works in your own context is more important than how I do it. I'm actually going to give you *two* clear methods for audition integration which are typical and ones that I've used at my current and previous churches.

Method 1: Rehearsal-driven

Once you're happy with what you see and hear through observation and conversation you want to invite the person to a couple of rehearsals. They key here is to setup your new friend succeed. You want to do everything you can as a leader (you're the leader, remember?) to help them do a great job.

So over-communicate what they need to know and what they should expect. Make sure you're clear on arrival time, what they should bring in terms of equipment, give them more than enough time to rehearse then songs they'll be playing.

Do you use in ears? They may not know this or have experience with it in the past. Do you use Planning Center to help your musicians practice at home? Get them integrated into your regular team process right away to help them understand expectations even as part of the audition process.

You want to set them up with everything they need to feel confident when they come – they know the songs, they've got chord charts or lyric sheets, explain to them how rehearsal is going to happen. Include them as a full participant in your worship team at the rehearsal – the only major difference is that you may want to keep their voice/instrument in the monitors only and keep them out of the house.

Whatever your audition process is, do everything you can to set the person up to succeed. Part of your role is to grow the worship capacity of your church and part of that is developing new members of your worship team. Give them the best chance they can get to give you their best!

Added bonus if you use a personal mixing system like Avioms, you can occasionally bring that person's instrument/voice in and out of your own in-ear mix so I can hear a few things:

> How are they playing with the rest of the team?
> Are they listening to what others are playing?
> Is there a nice mix with the rest of the band?

At the end of your rehearsal, make sure your whole team is very encouraging and knows their involvement in the rehearsal was valuable for the team. At that point you'll need to consider if you want to bring them back for a second rehearsal or if you think they're just not ready yet to join your team. Remember that you may not have seen their best but you may want to give them another opportunity to be a part of our rehearsal – they may have played nervous, they may have been getting used to in-ears, they may not have been as familiar with the songs as they thought, they may have had a bad day at work. All kinds of reasons why it may not have gone well.

Up to this point, it is *crucial* for you to communicate that coming to rehearsal does not mean the person is joining your team for Sunday morning. I try my very best to be explicit (several times) that we are asking them to come to rehearsal only and that once they've done a couple of rehearsals we'll evaluate whether they are ready for Sunday morning. Yes, this comes from a bad experience where I wasn't clear enough with someone and they came (very prematurely) to our Sunday morning call time, ready to sing with the band that morning.

Not a fun conversation out in the foyer of our church with that person, explaining that the invitation to rehearsal did not include an opportunity on our Sunday morning team!

Whether you are inviting people for a single or multiple rehearsals you'll need to create space where you can gauge if they are going to fit musically with where you'd like your team to go. Remember we're talking about audition *for change* and if you bring someone new on to

your team, your team *will* change so you need to evaluate (there's that word again) if the coming change will be in the right direction or not.

Method 2: Video-driven

This is the method we are currently using at our church and it's working very well. To begin with you want to create a form email that you can quickly send to anyone who is going to make it to this part of the audition process. (See **Appendix 1** at the end of this book for an email template that you can modify.)

That email should give people very clear instructions about how they should submit their video audition as well as some information on the calibre of video you are looking for.

Over time we build a library of these video auditions from people who are interested in joining our teams. Depending on the size of your church, the needs of your team, the number of musicians in your church and how often you do auditions you'll have your own number of video auditions you're looking to receive before beginning a live audition process.

You can also use this first step in the video-driven process to capture some info about the person using your church database if it has forms or a free solution like Google Forms to gather some very helpful information which will give you a clearer picture of the person who is wanting to join your team. (See **Appendix 2** at the end of this book for

an example of the questions we ask people who are interested in joining our worship team.)

This method is usually for larger churches who have higher musical expectations and more people wanting to audition but it could work just as well at a smaller church.

Use the video audition to evaluate whether or not you'd like to invite them for a live audition. Typically worship leaders who are leading a church where this method will work has the kind of musical ability and evaluation skills where you can tell just from the video if the person has the skill level you're looking for.

For the live audition you may want to integrate them into a rehearsal and then do a shortened version of Method 1 or, like we do, you may want to setup some dedicated audition nights where people come to the church.

Again, you want to set these people up to succeed so be very clear in your communication and in your expectations. Do you want them to audition specific songs or is it up to them to choose? If you have songs you want to hear them sing/play as part of their audition make sure you give them the material a couple weeks ahead of time. You don't want the audition to fail only because they didn't have time to prepare.

As part of the audition you may want to give them a song on the spot and see how they do with that but only do that if you are also giving

them a great change to prepare a couple of songs that they'll feel really confident playing when they come to audition.

If you're going to have a full team for them to play with as part of the audition you'll also want to make sure those people playing know the songs and the keys they're expected to play for the audition. Again, you don't want the audition to be unsuccessful because of something that was out of their control - set them up to succeed!

For singers, generally we want to hear them sing both melody and harmony line. We don't ask every singer on our teams to be both melody and harmony singers but auditions are a great place to discover that someone may be able to nail melody but they've got pitch issues when it comes to harmony.

For musicians, you're going to want to hear them play both fast and slow songs. You want to hear the full range of ability and discover in this audition process whether or not there's a genre or tempo that's right in their wheelhouse but once they go outside of that things get tricky.

Also if you typically use a click track on Sunday morning make sure that click is part of the audition and explain that before the audition happens so they're ready. You don't want to have someone join your team after an audition and then you discover that this drummer has never played to a click or a metronome and can't keep time. There are also cases where people feel their personal creativity is violated in

some way with a click track so, again, you want to discover that in the audition process if possible.

You may be thinking that moving to video auditions is a great way to make the job easier on you and your worship leaders but don't neglect the work that goes into communicating clearly and pastoring people through a process which may feel on their end very impersonal and mechanical.

Remind them that you want them to succeed and you're there to help them along the way!



Some questions for you to think about and discuss:

1. How can we best setup someone to succeed when they come to audition?

2. What would be some signals that this person is NOT ready to join our team?

3. What would be some ways we would know that they ARE ready to join our worship team?

