

Slavic Gospel Association

Loves Park, Illinois

Ministry

Executive Placed

Michael Johnson
Since May 2017



Situation

Like a lot of ministries their age, Slavic Gospel Mission has an aging donor base and fundraising revenue was trending down. They were faced with the reality of a generation shift in their donor base. What will the next generation support. How does

SGA reach the next generation of US donors and partner churches? There was “brand confusion”. Was the ministry trying to do too many things. Were they devoting their thin resources to areas that weren’t strategic to the mission?

Finally, the next President would be following the retirement of a long-serving and beloved President. Many of the donors had been brought to the ministry by him. How would his retirement impact giving?



Strategy Deployed

At the beginning of the search we do a lot of listening. We spent time with the Board, both in a group and individual appointments, listening closely for their expectations and how they would define success for the next President. We spent time

with the members of senior and mid management, hearing their heart on the strengths and weaknesses of the ministry.

Finally, we formulated our search around the experience and jobfit characteristics that the next President would need



Outcome

Our position on what SGA needed in their next President was someone who was familiar with the ministry, understood the model and was an outstanding fundraiser. The specific model for SGA is that of an equipping ministry, so the more resources available to their partners in the former Soviet Union, the more pastors will be trained, churches will be planted and those that are lost will be saved.

Michael Johnson was the successful candidate. He had worked for SGA earlier in his career but had spent the previous 13 years as Senior

Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer with two fundraising firms that specialized in helping faith-based non-profits. He was very familiar with the fundraising approach that is at the center of the SGA model.

Michael knew he was walking into a ministry whose support base was in decline but had substantial upside. Some of the things he did: He first developed a new website after rebranding the ministry under the following tagline: *Sharing the Gospel – Equipping the Church – Helping the Forgotten.*

He then identified those ministries that would translate into compelling fundraising offers. This led to an improved cultivation program and a series of new donor acquisition packages that were tested resulting in the beginnings of a successful donor growth program.

This strategy is a “long game” strategy. Between the above and a new major gift program, it will take 2-3 years for all of the elements of the new strategy to make the kind of impact that will produce the revenue stream that will meet expectations.