CONSTRUCTING A SOLID COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

DON HARRIS
CONFERENCE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
KIRKWOOD UCC COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER
OUR AGENDA

• Using social media, websites, and email, we will learn how to build an electronic communications plan to reach and engage your members, friends and the world at large.

• We will talk about the best, most cost-effective tools and techniques for reaching each of your constituencies and growing your ministry.

• My goal is to provide tips, resources and exchange of ideas to support and enhance your local church communications.
5 MYTHS ABOUT CHURCH MARKETING
FAMILY FEUD TIME

WHAT IS THE #1 MYTH ABOUT CHURCH MARKETING?
“The Gospel doesn’t need Church Marketing”
5 MYTHS OF CHURCH MARKETING

• The Gospel doesn’t need “marketing.”
• Church marketing looks awful.
• Church marketing is too expensive.
• Church marketing doesn’t get a response.
• Church marketing doesn’t reach the unchurched.
WHAT IS
CHURCH MARKETING
WHAT IS CHURCH MARKETING AND DO WE NEED IT?
THE TRUTH IS, MAYBE NOT.

• There are some churches — actually there are a lot of churches — that would answer “No.”

• If your church isn’t delivering a solid worship and community experience and/or doesn’t have the infrastructure to support growth in attendance, you shouldn’t be thinking about church marketing.

• It’s one thing to invest thousands of dollars to create epic events and fill your sanctuary with warm bodies.

• It’s another thing to meet people’s needs, connect them with your community, and have them return the following Sunday.

• Don’t start to “market” until you have a solid “product” to promote.
SO, WE NEED MARKETING

HOW DO WE GET THERE?
STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR CHURCH BRAND

• **Internal.** The internal identity is how well your church knows itself, its values, and its ministry.

• **External.** Your church’s external identity is how you communicate your internal identity to the community around you as you make yourself known. The better you as a church know yourself and what you stand for, the better your church will connect with everyone who comes in contact with the brand.
STEP 2: ASSESS YOUR AUDIENCE & MARKETING CHANNELS

• Who are you trying to reach?
• What methods of communication make the most sense for your congregation based on demographics?
• Channels of Communication
  • In Person (announcements, meetings)
  • Print (bulletin, newsletter)
  • Electronic (website, social media, e-news)
STEP 3: SET REALISTIC & MEASURABLE GOALS

• Clearly define what you want your marketing efforts to communicate and by when.
• Be sure and set a realistic and measurable goal.
• Some ideas:
  • Increase web traffic by 10% by March 1
  • Consistently tweet 3 tweets a day by March 1
  • Make one blog entry a week between Jan 1 and July 1
STEP 4: 
CREATE A PLAN

• Be very specific and detailed by answering what will be done, when it will begin and end, who is responsible, what it will cost, and what is the goal.
STEP 5: MEASURE & EVALUATE YOUR PLAN

• Evaluate your plan periodically to see which initiatives are working well and those that aren’t working at all.

• Don’t be too quick to give up on strategies that require time, but don’t be afraid to shift gears if something clearly doesn’t fit your church and its mission.
the power of a BRAND
THE POWER OF YOUR BRAND: BE YOURSELF!

• Logos
  • If you have a good logo, use it.
  • If not, use the UCC branding.

• Photography
  • No stock photos
  • Use a professional photographer

• Words
  • Ensure that the language you use is consistent with the church’s vision and mission.
PHOTOGRAPHY BEST PRACTICES

• A person's image photographed in a public place is not considered an invasion of their privacy or illegal, so pretty much any image is fair game. But...

• Use common sense when posting photos. Just because you can, don’t think you should.

• While one doesn't technically have to ask permission of children to post a photo taken in a public space, ALWAYS ask the permission of parents to use the photos before posting them!

• Do not intrude into anyone's solitude, seclusion or private property without permission.

• Do not print any photo or story that presents the subject in a false light.

• Do not appropriate any photo of any person for any commercial use (such as brochures, advertisements, or even for illustrations months after the news event) without permission.
HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS LEVELING THE FIELD

for Small Churches & Church Plants
KNOW & TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

• World (anyone/everyone)
  • Primarily your website, outbound one-way communication
  • Usage: Announcements, Press Releases, Calendar, About the Church

• Community (congregants, friends)
  • Primarily social media, 80% outbound, 20% inbound
  • Secondarily website (blog with comments); e-newsletter
  • Usage: Event Invitations, special interest articles the general public will ignore (“for the church family” stuff)
KNOW & TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

• Congregation (members, visitors)
  • Primarily in-person: announcements, bulletin
  • Secondarily “private” electronic communications: Facebook or Google groups with most of the content being congregation driven and provided (i.e. prayer concerns)
  • Usage: Prayer Requests, Financials, Committee Meeting Minutes, other “insider” news
USE MULTIPLE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

• Some people love to go online; others don't have a computer.
• Some love words; others prefer images and videos.
• Some love to listen to podcasts; others don't have any idea what a podcast is.
• Some tweet, blog, live on Facebook, and others consider social media a monumental waste of time & a pernicious evil.
• Some text continuously; some won't read anything that isn't on paper.
• Some only listen to the announcements on Sunday at church!
FACEBOOK TIPS

• Post as the Admin, get someone else to tag photos
• Use Multiple administrators
• Keep the message “on brand” and targeted
OPEN DISCUSSION

SHARE SOME OF YOUR TIPS AND TRICKS
SOURCES

- http://blog.d2design.com/7-most-common-church-website-mistakes/
- http://blog.d2design.com/5-myths-church-marketing/
- http://blog.d2design.com/what-is-church-marketing/
- http://blog.d2design.com/the-12-essentials-of-church-communications/
- http://blog.d2design.com/things-that-should-never-be-found-on-a-church-website-4/
- http://blog.d2design.com/5-steps-for-creating-a-church-marketing-plan/
- http://flocknote.com/blog/8-simple-ways-improve-your-parish-communication
- http://ministrycom.org/
- http://www.internettoolboxforchurches.com/
- http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/

Many images courtesy D2Design.