

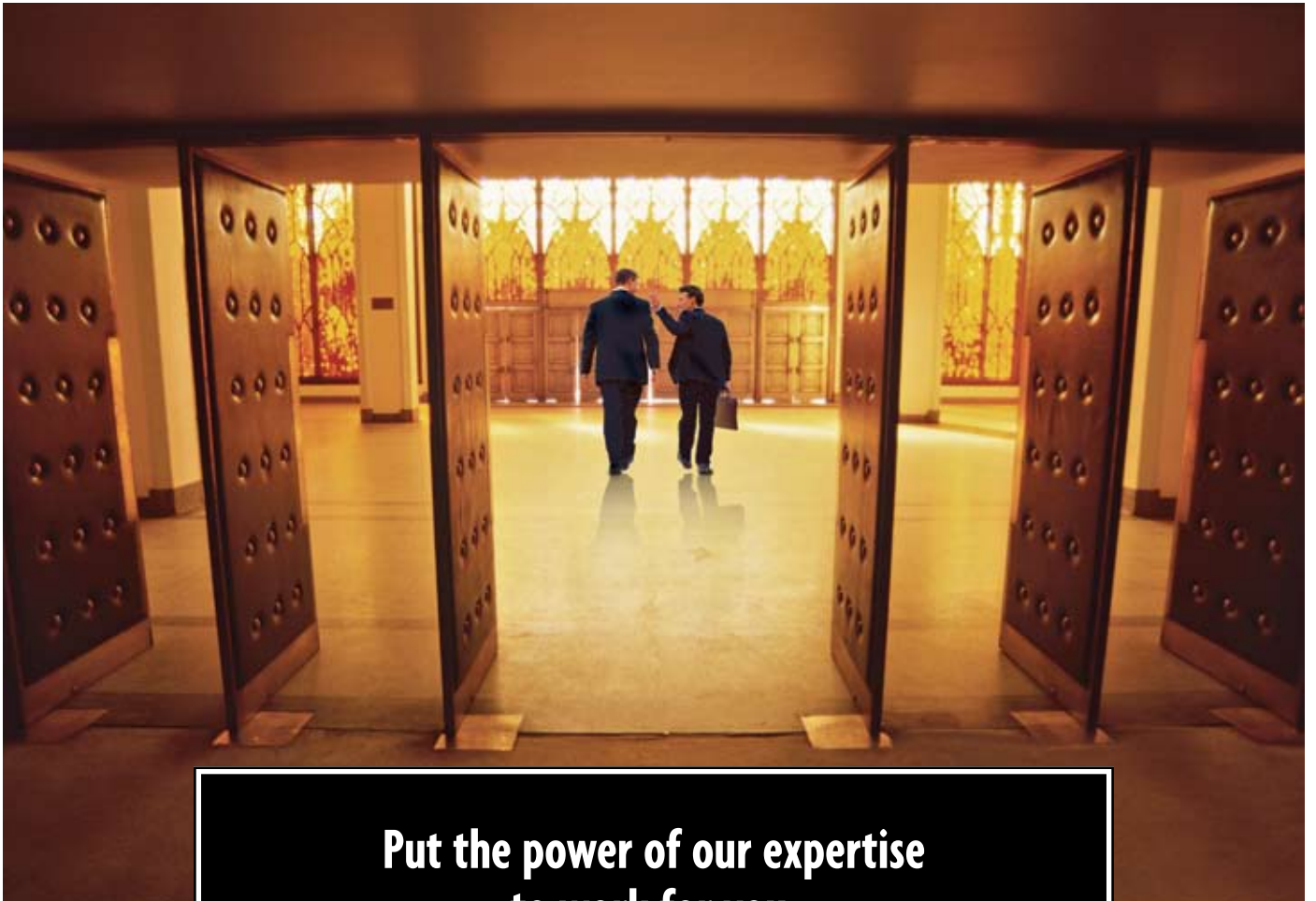
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A Publication of Church Supplies & Services | November 2007

3 Critical Questions for Church Communication Success

...and their Answers

by Yvon Prehn, P26



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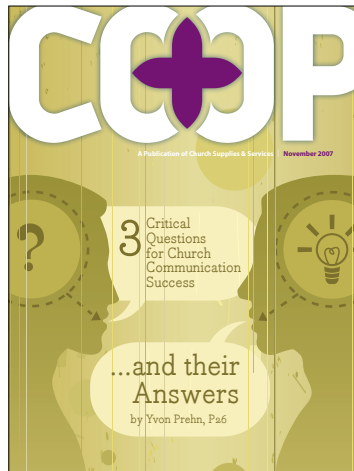
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Keep your Contact Information Current. The lifeline of communication to our members is through correct contact information, i.e. key contact names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. All updates should promptly be sent to danbishop@churchco-op.org. Help us keep you informed of the latest in savings and events from our vendors.

Editors Note For submitting articles, artwork or comments about this publication, please contact: Dan Bishop P.O. Box 821243 Houston, TX 77282-8243 . 888.350.3264



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Find us Faithful...

In several family celebrations during the past year, I listened as the song was sung about "Those Who Come Behind Us". Perhaps you know the song. I thought about how the message may pertain to our CO+OP, as well.

Our CO+OP is just beginning our 20th year of Churches Helping Churches. Perhaps you know the story about how, in 1988, the administrators from two of the larger churches in Houston were saying to one another "let's combine our efforts and approach our vendors to get them to let us pay less for what we are buying from them." From that small start, we are now a group of more than 1,000 members and 30+ vendors.



It occurred to me that our CO+OP also benefits from those that are faithful to our mission of Churches Helping Churches. We're strongest when our members are faithful to consider CO+OP vendors for the goods and services they buy. We're strongest when our members are faithful to participate.

Our vendors join in anticipation of earning more business, and helping ministries. Members join to save money and promote good stewardship. It's the relationships that make it work. Isn't that always true?

We have a new vendor for you: PhoneTree, PCS Communications. Our CO+OP is pleased to welcome this professional toolbox for phone communications. Over the years, PhoneTree has set the industry standard for providing personal touch voice messaging for churches and schools. Now they have a special offer for CO+OP Members. See their adv. on page 11.

Join me this season in welcoming our new Houston area marketing representative, Mary Kaye McCoy. If you are near Houston, you'll soon be seeing her. Reach her by phone or e-mail. She's here to help you. marykayemccoy@churchco-op.org You will enjoy having a relationship with Mary Kaye.

Thank you for what you are doing to help your ministry and others by your participation in our CO+OP. Make a point to share the opportunity with others you know that may be able to help their own ministries. Help us help them.

Let those who come behind us find us faithful...and grateful for the provision that is so evident in our thoughts at this time of year.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Dan Bishop
Executive Director



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Save the Date!

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banknotes

Applying for a Church it's all about communication

by Marianne Berlan

Applying for a loan for your church is all about communication – articulating your church’s vision and how the proposed acquisition, construction/remodeling project or refinance will help you achieve your goals, and why your church is creditworthy. Frank and open communication is essential not only through the loan application process but thereafter. Unlike home mortgage loan documents, commercial loan documents contain ongoing obligations for both the borrower and lender, so you should anticipate that your lender will have a continuing interest in the Church’s affairs throughout the life of your loan. You will, in fact, be entering into a covenant relationship with a financial institution which can only be enhanced by open communication.

Generally speaking, the loan approval process starts with the borrower submitting a loan application consisting of a written description of what the funds will be used for, a brief history of the church, financial information, congregation demographics, etc. Even the most thorough loan application is likely to provoke questions from the lender as they endeavor to understand your operation and develop a relationship with you. Telephone conversations and onsite visits are both an important part of this process, but you should be prepared to follow up verbal explanations with an email or letter, as important points of clarification will be included in your loan file. If answers are not in writing, there is always the risk that something important is missed or misunderstood. This could lead to confusion and delay your loan approval.

Church loans generally run 5 to 10 years or more, and your lender will need to keep all the information you provide to them in a secure file to support their loan approval. These files are accessed only by those with a “need to know”, such as the relationship manager, the underwriter, the documentation specialist or managers. However, they will be available to both internal and external loan examiners as required by Federal law. Information contained in a bond prospectus, including financial information, projections, information

about the leadership, and other information will be made available to the public at large.

Your loan documents will almost certainly require you to provide the lender annual financial statements, a budget for the upcoming year, and perhaps other information within a certain timeframe after the end of your fiscal year. There may also be covenants that limit the amount the church can borrow or lease, or certain threshold covenants such as liquidity ratios, etc. The Church’s Business Administrator should review the loan documents, highlight all ongoing covenants, and keep a copy of these handy for reference as needed.

Both parties to the loan should maintain the highest levels of integrity, adhering not only to the letter of the agreement but also to the spirit of it. The onus is on the borrower to inform the lender of any event which may affect the viability of the church, such as leadership changes, the proposed acquisition of new facilities or a proposed merger, the desire to incur additional debt, or a significant downturn in attendance and giving. If the loan agreement requires you to



Loan

provide the lender with a CPA prepared financial statement within 90 days of your fiscal year end, and your auditor will not have it finished in time, you should be proactive and call you lender to ask for an extension of the due date.

Even though there may be no specific prohibition against building onsite with cash, you should inform your lender of any activity that could affect the church's financial viability or the value of the collateral. Any construction project, large or small, gives rise to the prospect of liens, which may take precedence over the lender's mortgage and constitute an "event of default", forcing the lender to take action. Don't be afraid to tell your lender about any and all upcoming plans. The lender cannot unreasonably withhold their approval of, for example, construction of a new classroom building which you have the cash to pay for, but they are entitled to ensure that you don't undertake this sort of activity without the proper checks and balances up front.

Communication is a two way street. A good church lender will maintain frequent contact with you throughout the loan approval process and then through the life of the relationship. He or she will help you through each step of the process and give you realistic expectations regarding turnaround time.

You can start by finding an institution with a good reputation and a long track record of lending to churches. Don't hesitate to ask for references. Look for someone who is knowledgeable and consultative: someone you can trust. Ask questions about the type of loans the institution offers, and what kind of terms and conditions you should expect. Read the offer letter or term sheet carefully to ensure that everything you've previously discussed with your relationship manager is addressed in writing and to your satisfaction. An experienced and reputable lender should provide you with formal credit approval shortly thereafter.✦

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Biblical Pr

for Today's Busy
Communication Culture

By: Michael Euliss

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” – Galatians 5:22-23

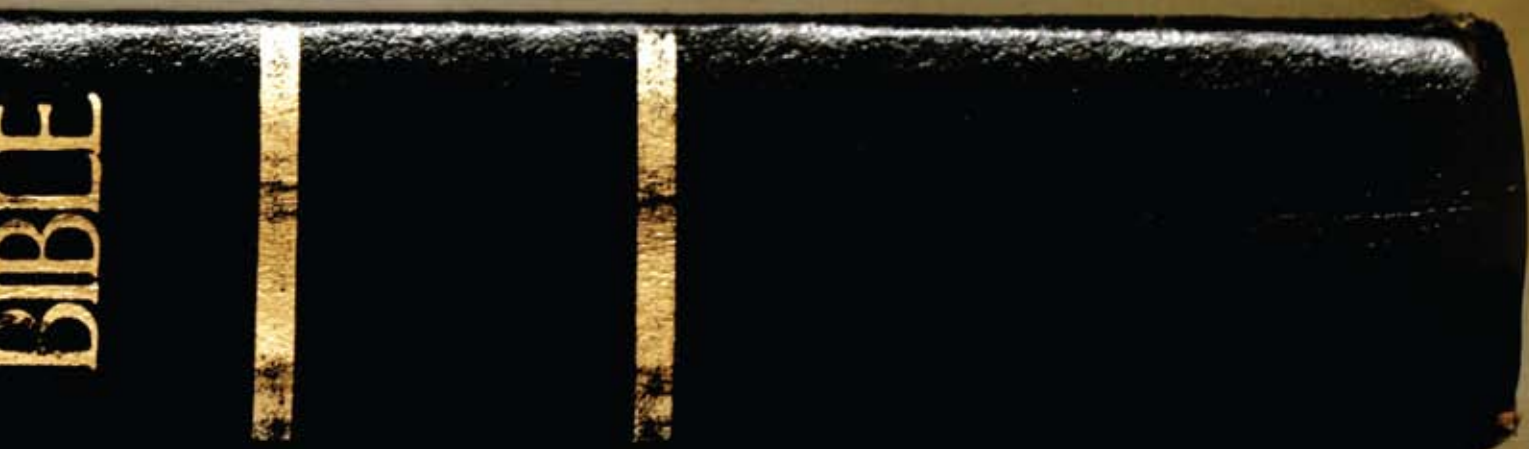


Principles

We've all had them. We've all heard them. We've all experienced them. You know the feeling: that feeling you get when you sit down to supper and, just as you start to pray, the phone rings. You hesitate, but answer anyway because it might be "important". As you pick up the handset you realize it's a telemarketer who quickly launches a spiel. Before you know it, you're tied up for 10 minutes or more while your supper gets cold. You want to hang up on them, and some of us do. But afterward, you generally don't feel all warm and cozy inside. However, that's the opposite effect the caller wanted to have on you, and the opposite effect you want your own calls from your church or ministry to have on others.

You want your congregation's total church experience to be pleasant and engaging. Sometimes that begins with a phone call. This means not only your call, but the call of any volunteer ministry leader. Whether or not the caller is a paid staff member, a call from the church is a call from the church. Many churches today have automated "phone trees" - devices that call people automatically. They're great for efficiency and keeping your members engaged, but certain rules of etiquette apply.

Let's explore some of the rules you should follow as Christians when making calls to members of your congregation and others, using Galatians 5:22-23. Consider this passage as it applies to your communications:



Love – Make each call with love in your heart. Is this call the right thing to do? Will its content hurt anyone? Ask yourself, “When I finish, will the recipient know I love them as Christ taught us?”

Joy – Are you taking this opportunity to lead God’s people with joy in your heart or do you consider making these calls a burden? If you think it’s a chore, it will show through to the people you’re calling. Take time to pray before each call. Remember why you took this ministry position and let that show through.

Peace – Make sure your call creates an attitude of peace. Don’t let your words or tone cause disharmony. Ensure that all necessary parties are notified. In the case of volunteers, make sure you take time to include and ask everyone who has asked to participate on a regular basis, not just those who say “yes” every time. Find ways of getting everyone engaged. This may sound like a lot of work, but there are now automated messaging systems that can help involve new volunteers for you automatically.

Patience – Remember each time you call to be aware of your own environment as well as the unknown environment into which you’re calling. As you get ready to call, create an environment that allows you not to be hurried on the phone. Eliminate distractions and don’t try doing other things while on the call. The recipient will know you’re distracted, and you’ll come across as insincere or impatient. Also consider the environment of the person you call. When you have details or information to share, allow them time to get note-taking material. If you’re using automated messaging, check to see if the manufacturer has a feature that allows you to give the caller this consideration.

Kindness – Do remember the bullies on the playground? You know, the ones who intimidated people they did not like? Ephesians 4:31-32 says to “get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”. Understand that you may be calling someone with whom you’ve had an unpleasant experience. Be sure to give them the same consideration as you would anyone else. Don’t call them more than others to give them more work, and don’t call them less, running the risk of alienating them.

Goodness – The Greek word for goodness in Galatians 5:22 is, “agathosune,” the root being “agathos,” meaning “benefit” or “blessing.” Ask God to allow your call to be a blessing to those on the other end. This will change how you phrase your message and the spirit in which it’s constructed.

Faithfulness – Are you being a faithful steward in your responsibility? Your congregation wants to be involved in the life of your church. Are you faithfully following through and communicating as often, efficiently, and effectively as you need? Many times we as leaders say, “It would be easier if I just did it myself.” It may be, but you would not be fulfilling your role as a leader. Helping them grow while the job gets done is your primary role.

Gentleness – There are many stories about George Washington that serve as illustrations of at least one aspect of biblical meekness or gentleness. Here’s a favorite: On one occasion, Washington was fox hunting with a group of friends. One of the fields through which they were passing was bordered by a stone wall. As his horse jumped the wall it knocked off a stone. Washington immediately stopped, got down from his horse, and replaced the stone. One of his friends said, “You’re too big a man to bother with that.” He replied gently, “No, I am just the right size.” As you communicate with your congregation, do so in the same way. Be willing to assist and serve. Brings to mind a passage about a leader washing some feet, doesn’t it?

Self-control – Just because you can call someone at 7:00 in the morning or during the supper hour, does not mean you should. In your zealotry to serve, always consider those you serve. In today’s modern communication culture, find out how a person wants to be contacted (cell, home, office) and the best time to call them. Then, do your best to facilitate that.

A call from the church should never be placed in the same category as one from a telemarketer, and these important principles separate us from the noise of today’s busy world. A hurry-up society encourages us to, many times, forget these values. But we, as Christians, must always remember who we are as well as whose we are, following the scriptures as Jesus taught us. ~

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Ouch! I Can't Believe I Actually Hit the Send Button

By Patti Malott

You know what it's like. You're in a hurry trying to move from one task or meeting to another and think you can knock out one more response to an email. You type in your gut reaction to the subject and hit the "reply to all" button by mistake. You only meant to send one person on the list your truest feelings about the subject, but in haste, you prematurely hit the send button. Then it soaks in.....

Ouch! How embarrassing.





The 10 Rules of Email Etiquette +1

Most everyone has broken the rules of email etiquette at one time or another. We get lazy with personal email and make mistakes from rushing through corporate or business email. Both personal and business correspondence through email should be well thought out, reviewed, and spell-checked. Once that “send” button is hit, there is no retrieving it.

The following will be helpful if you have not heard about the rules of email. It will be a gentle reminder to those of you who know the rules but have become lax in your email etiquette habits.

1. Think before you send—you can’t take anything back.

- Once an email has been sent, there’s no way to unsend it. It essentially becomes a permanent written record with your name attached to it.
- Never send an email in the heat of the moment. Before you send a reply to a group email, be sure your response is suitable for all recipients. If it isn’t, you may not want to send it, period.
- Enter the recipients email address only after you’re finished composing an email. If you do so, you’ll avoid hasty, incomplete replies or inadvertent (and sometimes inappropriate) forwarding.
- When in doubt, don’t send.

2. Be aware that email is never private.

- Avoid sending emails with very sensitive or confidential content. Any email you send may be mistakenly forwarded to others, inadvertently left onscreen where

others can read it, or printed at a public printer and accidentally left where others can see it.

- If you have to convey a sensitive or confidential message, consider using a phone call or personal meeting instead.

3. Be careful with “forward” and “reply to all.”

- Before you forward a message to others, review the full content of the email and make sure there’s nothing private in it. Keep in mind that the forward and reply features on many email programs rehash the text of previous email exchanges at the bottom of the message.
- “Reply to all” is a useful but potentially dangerous feature. Make sure you don’t inadvertently reply to all when you mean to reply only to the sender. To avoid making embarrassing mistakes, always double-check the recipient list before you send it.

4. Be careful with humor and sarcasm.

- Subtleties of body language and tone of voice, which may make something funny in person, are completely lost over email.
- Even if you use emoticons, sarcasm is difficult to convey over email and can easily result in misunderstandings and hurt feelings.
- Crude jokes and insulting language typically have sour effects over email, no matter how well the recipient knows your sense of humor.

5. Write clearly and use standard grammar and punctuation

- Emails essentially are letters without the ink and paper. Follow the same rules of style, grammar, and clarity that you would use in writing a real letter. Always be clear and concise.
- Reread and spell-check your email before sending to catch typos.
- Avoid excessive use of odd punctuation, even in personal emails. Using ...ellipses... to no end... distracts your recipient... and makes your email... incoherent. USING ALL CAPS IS THE EMAIL EQUIVALENT OF SHOUTING AND PROBABLY ANNOYS YOUR RECIPIENT.

6. Never open suspicious emails or attachments.

- Viruses are everywhere on the internet. Emails from unknown senders may contain viruses or worms that can invade and damage your files, weaken your computer's security, or attach themselves to your outgoing email.

7. Don't send large attachments unless you have to.

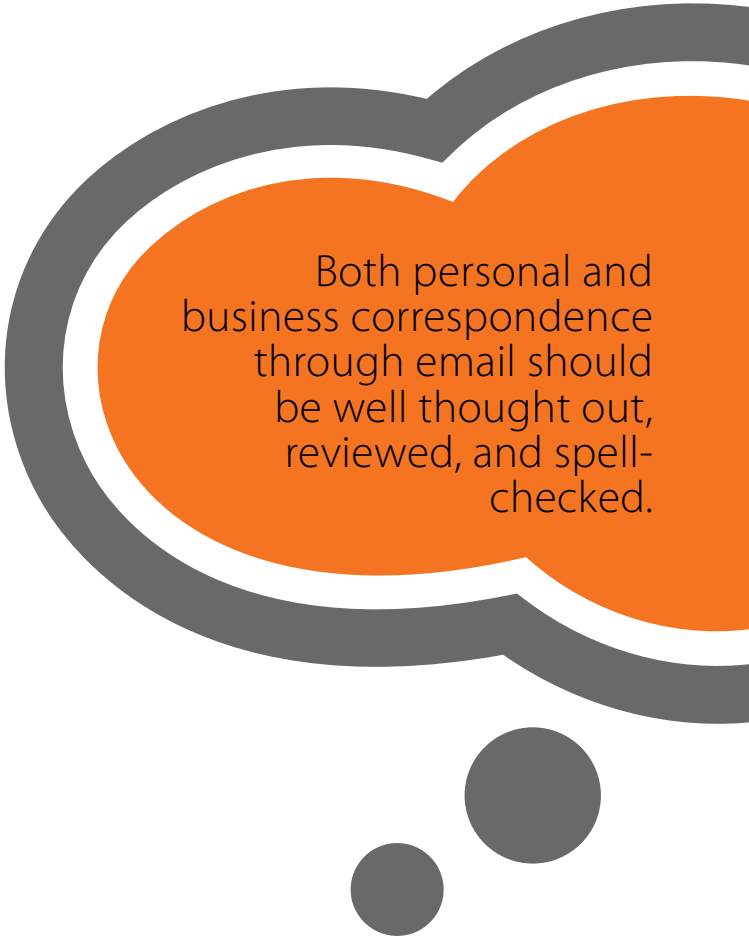
- Some internet users have high-speed connections, but many still have dialup service, which is slow and may require hours to download a large attachment.
- Large attachments may prevent a message from going through at all. Many email servers and networks have firewalls that limit the maximum size of individual emails, and many email services (e.g., Hotmail, Yahoo!) limit the size of each user's inbox.
- If you have to send a large attachment, warn the recipient beforehand and mention the file size in your email.

8. Be mindful of others' software and operating systems

- Not all email users have the same software or even the same operating system (e.g., Windows vs. Mac). Don't automatically assume that your recipient has the same software you do and that he'll be able to open files that you send as attachments.
- Before you send an attachment, let the recipient know what format it's in and ask whether he'll be able to open it.

9. Don't use fancy colors and fonts.

- Although it may be tempting to beautify your email with formatting, doing so creates clutter and distracts from the content of your message.
- Be aware that many fonts and colors don't translate across different email programs. Something that looks great on your screen may come through as a bunch of garbled characters on the recipient's computer.



Both personal and business correspondence through email should be well thought out, reviewed, and spell-checked.

9. Don't use fancy colors and fonts.

- Although it may be tempting to beautify your email with formatting, doing so creates clutter and distracts from the content of your message.
- Be aware that many fonts and colors don't translate across different email programs. Something that looks great on your screen may come through as a bunch of garbled characters on the recipient's computer.

10. Don't forward every forward you receive.

- Forwards can be fun, but many of them have been circulating on the internet for years, and many people hate getting them. If you want to pass along a particularly entertaining or astute forward, clean it up

first. Remove all previous exchanges and recipient's email addresses from the body of the email, and clean up extra characters (such as >>> or ---) to make the email easy to read.

11. Use the subject line wisely

- Be careful what you type in the subject line of your email. Too often, people will exchange emails back and forth and never remember to change the text in the subject line as they move on to other topics. This makes it very difficult when trying to locate a specific email later on. Always use the subject line for text that is relevant to the current email you are sending. ✦

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE SENDING A SENSITIVE, PERSONAL EMAIL

1. Would I say this in person? Am I avoiding confrontation by sending this email?
2. Did I reread this and look for errors or other problems that could potentially cause misunderstandings? If so, did I clear them up?
3. Is this email really necessary? Would a phone call be better? Do I really need to send it, or did composing the email itself let off enough steam?
4. Am I sending this to the right person? Is there anyone else who should be involved (human resources, managers, etc.)?
5. Will I regret this?



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“Com
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Communication to Community”

BY BRENNA SCHMIDT

that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing.” This quote by Rollo May describes what society, without even knowing, creates with day to day communication. Communication is one of the core competencies that we as humans must master to lead a successful and fulfilling life...

professionally, religiously, and personally.

visual



Communication between humans as a society revolves around many things, with one in particular being visual. The idea of visual communication was created with the understanding that media and the arts are important modes in putting together and empowering communities. This vehicle of communication is also important in building connections between generations, challenging perspectives, and creating environments for critical thinking... all which are necessary to build a stronger and more compassionate society.

Visual communication takes place in so many ways. Some we consciously see, others are more subliminal, so we don't take so much "visual" notice of them. One of these that I would like to focus on is that of signage. Signs are one of the most basic, yet powerful, approaches to visual communication in almost every industry that exists. We have open signs, closed signs, warning signs, road signs, storefront signs, ground signs, billboards, exit signs, entrance signs... etc, etc... the list goes on and on, and I think you get the message! A sign can provide many statements and, if done well, can be a very positive extension of your overall image. On the flip side, if it is not done well, it can harm by sending out a message that is distracting or overdone.

The correlation between signage and visual communication is very strong for other reasons as well. Society relies heavily on the look and idea of branding which instills a sense of repetition in potential clients. It is about getting your prospects to see you as the only one that can provide a solution to their problem, whether that problem is a personal crisis in need of support and faith, or that perfect pair of shoes for a night on the town. This gap in the communication is in many ways relieved by effective signage, which integrates a brand strategy at every point of contact. The communication a sign provides resides within the hearts and minds of customers, clients, and prospects, and it provides the groundwork in marketing communication.

It seems blatantly obvious that signs are a method of visual communication, but there are some things that are not so clear, and that is the thought of technology. As we all know, technology surrounds us in every way, and it is becoming more and more evident with every year that passes. As Ester Dyson put it, "It may not always be profitable at first for businesses to be online, but it is certainly going to be unprofitable not to be online." This statement says a lot, not only for being online but it also transcends into having effective communication with your signage. It may not be clear just yet that it isn't

working for you, but year after year of bad communication with the audience on the street will definitely be apparent when sales fall, membership dwindles, or traffic slows. With all of that said, the relationship between visual communication and signage is definitely one that should be handled with care. Our everyday contact with brands, signage, and visual communication lies in the ability to connect markets and business, creativity and analysis, customers and shareholders, promises and reality, today and tomorrow.

As you might guess, visual communication in the sign industry is at the forefront of the agenda. It is the job of the manufacturer to make their clients look good, to make the customers want to walk in, and to send the message as effectively as it can be sent. This should be completed in a process that is streamlined and seamless in hopes of helping to create a brand and a communication with a similar target audience. The visual aspects of the design and construction are key components to a successful business, and great pride should be taken in helping to create a smooth message that is both eye catching and informative. In closing, it should be noted that all signs should communicate with the same ideals important to a rewarding life...style, elegance, and passion.✚

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The world in which we do our church communications can be a stressful and complex place. We spend lots of time and money on communication projects and wonder if they are really helping the growth of the church. We are confronted with a multitude of ways to produce our communications—print or digital; on paper or on the web, and we wonder what is most effective. We know we need more people involved to get all the communications work done that needs to be done, but we worry that volunteers may not create communications that will measure up to the standards of excellence we have for the church.



3 Critical Questions for Church Communication Success

...and their
Answers

by Yvon Prehn

www.thelionsvoice.com

3 Critical Questions

1. How can I make the scattered communication pieces my church produces fit into the overall vision and ministry of the church?
2. What is the best way to reach people today? Print or online, PowerPoint or video?
3. How can I get the volunteers I need to help do all the communication we do and have them do it the way I want them to?

The answers to the 3 Questions are found in the following key concepts I teach in my seminars and that will be described in more detail in the remainder of this article. For additional information about each concept, please go to my website: www.thelionsvoice.com.

3 Key Concepts for Church Communication

1. The Five Steps of Effective Church Communication and Marketing
2. The Reality of Multi-Channel Communication
3. The Two Teams of Church Communication Implementation.

In the midst of these situations, the demands and challenges of church communications' ministry can appear overwhelming. But if we can get a bit of distance, if we can see the big picture of church communications, our perceptions change. It's like moving from ground level to the view we get of the world from an airplane window. I fly in and out of Los Angeles to and from the many church communications seminars I teach. On the ground some parts of LA are rundown and neglected. The traffic can be choking, the routes confusing, but as I fly in late at night, from high in the sky, LA is a twinkling tapestry of light and moving patterns of shimmering beauty.

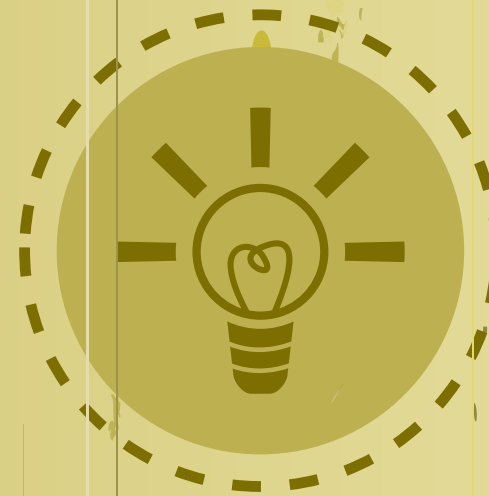
In the same way I get a view of LA from the air, I feel the Lord has given me a bird's eye view of church communications. I have been involved professionally in church communications my entire adult working life and for over twelve years my ministry has involved traveling and teaching seminars to hundreds of churches every year across North America. I talk to many people from every imaginable denomination. I hear their stories, I look at their publications. I laugh with them; I cry with them over the joys and frustrations in their work. From that vantage point, I would like to share the Three Critical Questions for Church Communication Success and their Answers

When you understand this concept, it will give you a foundation and framework for your entire communications ministry. You will have a logical progression in which to place all the individual church communication projects

It begins with the foundation Jesus gave us for all we do in the Great Commission:

Matt. 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

What we are to be about in our lives and in our church communications is to introduce people to Jesus and to help them grow to maturity in the Christian faith. This five step progression places all of your communications into that process.



5

Steps of Effective Church Communications & Marketing —to help your church fully fulfill the Great Commission

TASK	Target Audience	Marketing Strategy	Ministry Goals	Effective Communications
Step #1 INVITE	Unchurched people Visitors Community	See	Identify the church Unchurched into the church Become regular attendees Evangelism	Identity pieces: logos, business cards, stationary, signage; Outreach: invitation cards, postcards, ads, door-hangers, tracts; Outreach support publications; Welcoming & directional materials. Print & Digital Versions
Step #2 INFORM	Visitors Regular Attendees Crowd	Sample	Personal Salvation Learn about the church Join the church Worship	Bulletins & Bulletin Inserts; Visitor & Prayer Cards; Visitor & member communications; Gospel presentations, Doctrinal & denominational literature; Church overviews; Overall church newsletters. Print & Digital Versions
Step#3 INCLUDE	Church Members Committed Attenders Congregation	Select	Participate in church or ministry events Experience ministries beyond Sunday morning or main meeting Fellowship	Age, life-stage program info & PR: children, youth, singles, seniors, etc. Ministry specific: newsletters, brochures, calendars, event info, and PR. Print & Digital Versions
Step#4 INSTRUCT	Involved Members & Attenders Committed	Stay	Spiritual Growth and Maturity Biblical Training Small Group Participation Discipleship	Training materials for all age and life-stage groups: notes, lessons, background, resources; Teachers: manuals, support materials; Corporate devotional and Bible reading, inspirational reminders; Small group: PR, lessons, support. Print & Digital Versions
Step#5 INSPIRE	Leaders, Workers, Key Volunteers Church Staff: professional, lay, & bi-vocational Core	Sell	Ongoing Service & Outreach Lifestyle & Church Ministry Consistent Giving Missions Involvement Ministry	Volunteer & Staff: recruitment, training, affirmation; Equipping publications; Encouraging & inspiring materials; Financial publications; Missions involvement and support. Print & Digital Versions

5 Steps of Effective Church Communication

Step #1: INVITE

Communication Task: to invite people; to simply get them into the church or to attend a church-involved or sponsored activity. Your communications don't have to do or explain too much at this step. Simple, colorful, inviting, culturally sensitive, clear and consistent should describe communications at this level.

Communication Tools: business and invitation cards, postcards, flyers, door-hangers, direct mail, the outreach-oriented parts of your website. Developing a logo and identity package is often a foundational step here.

Step #2: INFORM

Communication Task: once you get people there, you need to inform people in complete, clear, and caring ways about what is going on at the worship service or church event they are attending and what else is going on in the church.

Communications Tools: church bulletins, PowerPoint presentations, introductory brochures, communications with visitors, visitor packets all fit in here. Departmental sections (youth, children's, singles' and similar sections) on your website also should inform about your programs and how people can become involved.

Additional notes about this step: This step is incredibly important because studies show 70% to 90% of people who visit our churches do not return. I believe the communications we give folks when they visit has quite a lot to do with this.

Step #3: INCLUDE

Communication Task: For people to grow in the faith, they need to be included in more than Sunday morning. It is vital if people are to mature, that the church communications actively work to include them in more than the worship service.

Communication Tools: the overall church newsletter and ministry brochures structured to inform and take people to the next step of involvement; PR for small groups, maps, small group descriptions; communications. Web-supported calendars, reminder emails, web-based explanations of programs and PR are also important here.

The most deadly phrase that can kill off communications at this step is: "Oh, everybody knows." They don't. To get your people growing spiritually, you have to continuously, clearly and completely communicate to them what the church office and staff knows.

Step #4: INSTRUCT

Communication Task: Once you get people to an event outside Sunday morning, you need to teach them something if they are to grow in their Christian life. Sending people out from a worship service simply feeling good does not equip them for the spiritual warfare facing them during the week.

Communications Tools: Bible class outlines, teaching materials, take-home study guides, list of verses, memory verse card materials, quizzes, adult and youth Sunday School quarterlies, and teaching handouts can provide print resources. Web-based, in-depth discussion guides, reference materials, referral articles; web blogs on important topics, discussion rooms, and question opportunities are also useful.

Step #5: INSPIRE

Communication Task: Once people have learned the basics and are practicing discipleship, our communication task is then to inspire people with a passion to reach out to a lost world and to live lives of unselfish devotion to Jesus.

Communication Tools: brochures, web entries, lists and flyers that form the tangible, touchable, communication of how to help at the Rescue mission, the list of what is needed at the women's center, and the schedule for the Habitat build and similar concrete information. These are the communications that link inspiration with action; communications that incarnate the love of Jesus into our communities.

The Reality of Multi-Channel Communication

After sharing the overall strategic plan found above, we move into how to practically implement it. There are a lot of communications that need to be created, and invariably in my seminars again and again, people will ask, "What is the ONE thing I need to do for effective church communication?" They are disappointed when I tell them, there isn't any **one** thing.

Reality is we live in a time of both/and, not either/or in our world, in a time where we can't get rid of any channel, e.g. print. At the same time we always need to be appropriately using additional channels, which today are primarily in digital forms such as worship PowerPoint and video productions, phone messages, websites, and email newsletters. This becomes practical in your church communication program as you understand:

1. Various communication channels are best at communicating various aspects of the gospel message
2. Different people respond to and use different channels

Various communication channels are best at communicating various aspects of the gospel message

By communication channels I mean things like print, worship PowerPoint and video productions, phone messages, websites, email newsletters, and text messaging to name just a few.

Today we have a wonderful palette of communication channels to choose from and as wise story-tellers of the gospel we need to choose each tool available to tell the part of the gospel story we wish to share as in the representative examples that follow.

Worship Service PowerPoint and Video

These work well in mundane ways to communicate words of songs and to powerfully communicate emotion. A worship video can provide a moving and memorable experience and well-used images can reinforce verbal teaching.

What this channel does not do well is to communicate specific information—for example the address and directions of where the Newcomer Bible Study will be held and how to get to the pastor's house. For facts that need to be remembered and directions that need to be followed it's hard to beat print.

Printed bulletins

For factual content you want people to remember, print is very useful. Your church bulletin (including inserts that you can re-

move and place on the refrigerator) can contain schedules, lists of what to bring and directions that are very hard to remember from a brief exposure to a PowerPoint slide, no matter how beautiful it might be.

To remember the theology of a sermon you could provide fill-in-the-blank notes printed on three-hole punched paper, a notebook in which to save them, and this would serve far better than part of a page of the bulletin or sermon slides with no place to take notes provided.

Websites

It is as much a necessity for a church to have a website today as it is to have a listing in the phone directory. Today, people will search for a church website before looking at a phone directory.

A website can be used in many ways and they are ALL useful. It can simply be used as a brochure to give basic information about your church which is an important starting point. What you do from there is potentially unlimited. Video and audio of sermons, links to additional information about biblical topics, interviews and vision of the staff, overviews of volunteer positions, outreach opportunities, resource lists, small group chat rooms, etc.

Different people respond to and use different channels

The content and complexity of your communication program needs to be determined by what your people can receive rather than what your communications staff can create. Some people doing communications work in the church, have powerful computers, high speed internet connections and love the latest technology and genuinely want to share it with their world. But many of the people you want to reach with messages using the latest technology can't access it.

As a practical example, I love cutting edge technology as much as any other person who works in communications, however, some of my enthusiasm has been tempered in my real world ministry life. My husband and I are starting a county-wide ministry for Single Adults in S. California. I had all sorts of great plans for video lessons and devotions, but prior to launching them I remembered to follow my own advice and take a survey of how they can receive information first.

In an informal survey I found about a fourth of the people in the group don't even have access to email at home and far less than half of the ones that do have email have broadband where they could view videos. Not only would they not see be able to see videos I've been planning on creating, but quite a

few of them were not attending ministry events because I quit sending out postcards because I assumed everybody in the group had email—after all, they are single adults in S. California and I assumed everyone would have email.

I was wrong and I know better. I got lazy and defaulted to what I enjoy doing rather than taking the time to create what I know people needed. Printed materials, especially in the form of a postcard that can be posted on the refrigerator to remind people of upcoming events, are vitally important in any ministry today.

The bottom line: constantly survey and ask your target audience what they have access to and respond with a servant's heart to the needs of various groups. I love sending out emails to our singles because it is so easy, but if I want to reach everyone, I need to also send out periodic postcards and make personal phone calls.

The Two Teams of Church Communication Implementation

To accomplish all of the communications needed takes lots of people and one overworked secretary in the church office can't do it all. You need more than one person and you usually need volunteers. At this point church leaders typically become very concerned because they worry that volunteers will not live up to the standards of excellence set in the church. A very effective way to answer this concern is to divide your communications ministry into two teams:

PR team

Projects: the communications that represent the overall face of the church, e.g. the bulletin, overall newsletter, web site

Control: standards strict, tight controls

Implemented by: usually staff

Leadership: Senior staff, input from senior pastor

Ministry team

Projects: the multitude of communications that affect primarily ministries within the church: children's, youth, men's, women's, single's. All the notices, postcards, etc. that are needed

Control: much more flexibility

Implemented by: templates, basic guidelines set up sometimes by staff, most production done by volunteers

Leadership: Ministry leaders make the decisions and give out communication assignments.

Church communications will always be a tremendously challenging ministry, but if your church will implement the concepts presented here, your communications will become an effective tool as you labor to fulfill the Great Commission in your community. ✦

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by Frank Sommerville, JD

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

You are sitting in your office when parents deliver devastating news: they accuse your 22 year old youth minister of having sex with their 16 year old daughter. This article addresses some of the communication issues that arise when facing a crisis, such as one described in the prior sentence. All these steps should be made in connection with advice from a competent attorney.

Your first step is to determine who needs to receive communication from the church and the type of information you will need to communicate to the various groups. You need to avoid getting sued because you revealed private facts about someone or because you have defamed someone's reputation. You want to avoid talking about charges that may later prove to be false. At this stage, you only know that an accusation has been made. I am addressing only communication concerns before the church completes its investigation of the allegations.

1. Communicate with law enforcement. In this example, you must report the allegation to the appropriate law enforcement authorities because it involves potential abuse of a child. You will tell them the names and contact information about the victim, the persons who reported the abuse and alleged perpetrator. You will only repeat the exact allegation you received.
2. Preserve evidence. Once you receive the allegation you must take steps to preserve evidence, especially electronic evidence. This means you

physically seize the alleged perpetrator's computer and preserve all backups of email, voice mail and cell phone (if church owned). If the victim is also an employee or volunteer, you would take the same steps with their electronic records.

3. Communicate with the alleged perpetrator. You will visit with the youth minister and report the exact allegation you received. Next you should ask for any statement the perpetrator wants to make. Ask for names and contact information for witnesses that he suggests as having relevant information.

4. Communicate with the authorities within your church. You will then notify the authority within your church empowered to take action. Normally, this will be the senior pastor and church board. Again, you communicate only what you have been told. Everyone should be cautioned that this is a confidential matter and should not be discussed outside a formal, called meeting. The board needs to initiate any investigation.

5. Communicate with staff. After receiving direction from the governing body of the church, the staff needs to know the situation. The communication should be brief and factual. They should be given a brief statement to read if they are approached by members and instructed to refer all questions to the designated church representative. They should also be instructed that they are not to discuss the matter with any media other than reading the brief statement.

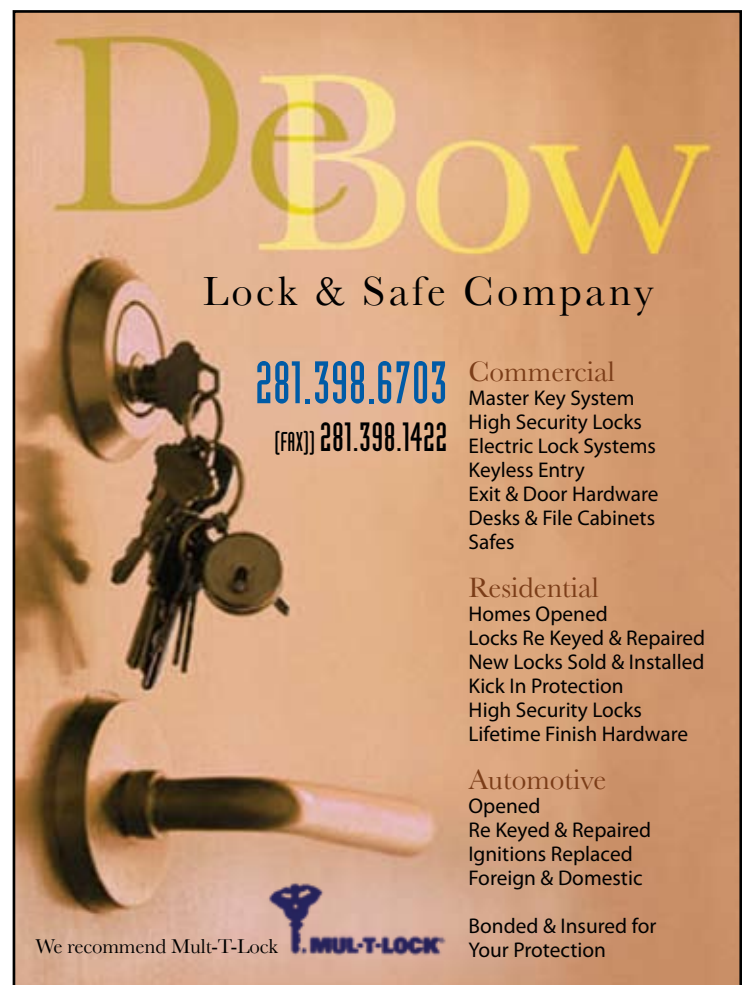
6. Communicate with members. You will then draft a statement that will be given or read to members at a church meeting. The statement will be very brief and general. In the example, it would state that an allegation about wrongful conduct has been made against the youth minister. You would then assure the members that the church board is investigating the allegation.

7. Communicate with the victim and her family. At this time you need to separate the role of pastoral care from the role of church representatives if the church is later sued. The victim needs pastoral care from someone who is not and will not be involved in the church's investigation and/or disciplinary action, if any. I typically suggest building a "Chinese wall" around the minister providing pastoral care so that he or she is unaware of the church's investigation and actions. In smaller churches, I suggest that you provide the pastor from a sister church to provide pastoral care because he or she will be able to freely minister God's love to the victim without concern about any legal issues.

8. Communicate with the alleged perpetrator and his family. Serious allegations have a major impact on the perpetrator and his family, regardless of the truthfulness of the allegation. Similar to the victim, these individuals need pastoral care from someone who will be able to administer God's love without concern over any legal issues. Again, the minister providing pastoral care will need to be separated by a "Chinese wall" from all involved in the investigation and/or disciplinary action. Smaller churches need to provide pastoral care from a minister not associated with that church, usually a pastor a sister church. This minister cannot be the same one that is ministering to the victim.

9. Communicate with the media. Assign a single person to interface with all media. This person should be very familiar with public relations and legal issues that may arise. The phrase "no comment" is generally not appropriate, but telling everything may be worse. Keep the comments focused on prayer for the families involved.

By keeping these rules in mind, the church may avoid miscommunication problems. ✦



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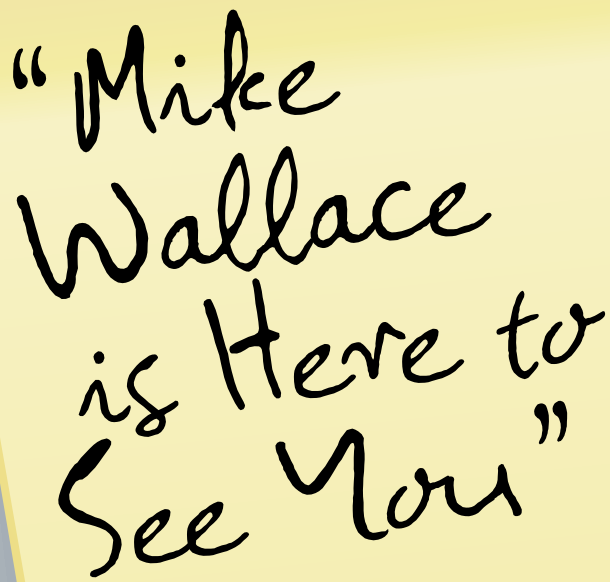
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“Mike
Wallace
is Here to
See You”

By Jeff Crilley,
Emmy Winning TV Reporter

There’s an old saying in corporate America, “You know it’s a going to be a rough week when your phone rings and your receptionist informs you that Mike Wallace is waiting in the lobby.”

Over the years, the famed **60 minutes** correspondent has barbequed many a CEO on national TV. But as a journalist with more than two decades of experience, I can think of something even scarier---a rookie reporter on deadline covering a juicy church scandal.

Here now are three tips to dealing with a media crisis that I hope you’ll never need:

1) “No Comment” isn’t an Answer

I don’t care what your attorney says; “No comment” won’t cut it. I give my free crisis communications talk all over the country and I’ve spoken to dozens of bar associations. Guess what? They don’t offer media courses in law school. Attorneys are simply told to tell their clients not to talk to the media. “We won’t try this case in the court of public opinion,” is the reason most attorneys will give their clients.

But while they’re waiting for your day in court, your church is making headlines and it’s testing the faith of even the strongest members of your congregation. I’m sorry, folks---“No comment” doesn’t make the story go away. It just goes on without you.

2) Face the Media Head On

Because of the contrast between good and evil, anytime someone in the ministry messes up, it’s a much bigger story than if your plumber did the same thing. That’s why it’s critical to address the crisis and tell the truth. A negative news story about a church can quickly spiral into a full-blown national news feeding frenzy.

It doesn’t mean you have to get into details of the case. Simply face the media and give reporters a statement that shows the church’s concern. Even a short statement delivered from the heart will go a long way. Here’s something you could say that even your attorneys shouldn’t have a problem with---“We’ve

devastated by the news. Most of us are just learning about this for the first time and we're trying to sort out fact from fiction. But we can tell you that, as a church family, we are hurting right now and we're asking for everyone's prayers as we try to get through this."

3) The Messenger is as Important as the Message

I've seen this time and time again---members of the clergy facing the media who should have let someone else do the talking. Remember, whoever talks to reporters becomes "the face" of the church. Most of the time that person should be the pastor. Years in the pulpit should serve as great practice for delivering the message with the right tone. But in times of crisis, whoever can best communicate the spirit of the church should be the person dealing with media. It doesn't matter how much money was spent designing the outside of your church, it's the spokesperson who will be the architect of the message and will set the tone for the coverage. Put all egos aside and decide who is the best person to convey the heavy heart of a church in crisis. ✚

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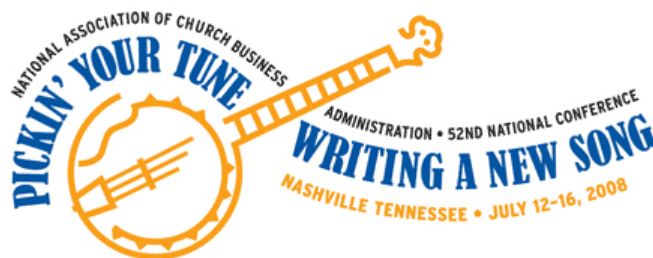
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It's All About the Message.

Making your Web Site Content Matter.

By Brian Jones, Pres/CEO Details Communications

It's a challenge these days for churches and ministries to keep up with the ever-changing face of Web Technology. Web 2.0, new Content Management Systems, and new programming languages illustrate the rapid, changing face of the Web world. Beyond the Web tech chaos of creating and maintaining a web site, the messaging is still the connection point for the Web user. Through all the emerging media, delivery, and content management options, it's the message and its ability to simply connect with people that matters most. Through your Web site content, you're either connecting or your missing the boat.

One of the biggest problems that plague church web sites today is over thinking and over complicating their web site content.

It's troubling to see how complex churches can make things, especially their Web site. One of the biggest problems that plague church web sites today is over thinking and over complicating their web site content. It is my goal to sort through the Web technology trends and noise to focus on the content of your web site and on little things that will make a difference in your messaging and impact. Here are some simple areas of refinement to your Web messaging that place a greater priority and impact on your content and messaging presentation.

Start with the Obvious. Providing the right content means understanding the audiences of your Web site. You have many messages to connect with many audiences. Embrace the realities: you cannot answer every question, but begin to focus on answering the obvious questions. Nothing is more annoying to

a Web visitor than not being able to find obvious things such as worship times, directions, what to expect, a media file from the Pastor, and childcare information, to name a few. With the different Web audiences, focus on creating layers of content with the basic needs content always appearing first. You will never go wrong with adhering to the basic messaging of who, what, when, where, and why.

Cut 30-50%. Most web sites are loaded down with meaningless messaging. You'll make immediate improvements in your web site's impact by eliminating 30-50% of your current Web content. Consider it "spring cleaning." People are inundated with messages today; they want less messaging and not more. You'll find this exercise will provide simplicity and clarity to your Web experience.



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Use Sound Bite Communication. In many ways, a Web site can be viewed as an editorial experience. Create concise sound bites on the “front page” to allow for quick connection. Effective Web sites have followed the lead of effective editorial communication in providing the simple “hook” messages that connect and cause readers to want more. Avoid lengthy sentences on your home page. Again, you’re not trying to tell the entire story but simply connect quickly with a need. Focus on making your sound bites and page links short and sweet for clear communication and connection. Also keep this in mind; typically people will only spend 2.5 minutes per site visit.

Simple Organization Will Always be the Standard. It’s hard to argue with the impact of simple organization and messaging. There is a universal trend to make it simple. Simple works. Simple connects. Rethink your site organization to ensure it’s as simple and logical as possible. Also, nothing is more frustrating than sorting through calendars and resources that are not logically organized. When managing content, media, and resources; put the simple test to work. Ask yourself, “How simply can people navigate, find resources, and connect on my site?” Make it a priority to dumb-down every facet of your Web site and its content.

Make Quick Tasks, Quick Tasks. There will always be portions of your Web site that are transactional. Because people view them as transactions, they naturally assume that they should be done efficiently. Registering for an event, finding a campus map, viewing the calendar, and downloading the current sermon mpeg should all be “one click away”. Consistent, routine transactions should not require multiple hoops to jump through. Prioritize your “one click” content.

Give your Messaging Some Life. I think we can all agree that most church web content lacks personality and inspiration. The fact of the matter is the church has the message that matters most. Breathe some life into your messaging and content. Tell more stories of how God is at work in the lives of people in your church, community and across the world. Also, focus on the messaging so it reflects the culture and vocabulary of your church leadership and congregation. Your church is unique and distinctive; let the messaging begin to support and underscore your church’s personality.

Learn from the Pros. Become more a student of communication. When you’re visiting your favorite Web site - espn.com, msnbc.com, oprah.com, or whatever it might be; observe and learn from the industry leaders that have spent millions in researching how to simply and effectively connect with people online. Peruse your favorite church web sites and focus on content presentation and what connects and what doesn’t. There are practical lessons right in front of you that will inspire you to raise the bar with your web content and messaging.

By focusing on these simple challenges, I’m confident you and your Web community will realize the impact of refining your online message. Through all the ever-changing trends of the Internet and Web site communication, one thing that will not change is the simple goal of connecting people with the content they are seeking. My challenge to you is to eliminate the noise and confusion to clearly communicate – people will thank you! +

It’s hard to argue with the impact of simple organization and messaging.



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By Gary Patterson

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nationalsigns.com

Al Ross 713.863.0600 x222
al.ross@nationalsigns.com

Teleconferencing

Civicom

civi.com

Rebecca West 203.618.1811
rwest@civi.com

Telephone Equipment & Services

DataVox

datavox.net

Alan Ferguson 713.881.7104
alan@datavox.net

PhoneTree

phonetree.com

Clif Kelley 800.951.8733
ckelley@phonetree.com

FINANCES

Bank of the West

bankofthewest.com

Glenn Billingsley 877.422.5537 Plano
gbillingsley@bankofthewest.com

Comerica Bank

comerica.com

Dale Rahlfs 281.423.3161 HOU
derahlfs@comerica.com

Charles Dowden 214.589.4496 DFW
cwendowden@comerica.com

Jim Terrell 214.589.1310 DFW
jcterrell@comerica.com

David Marks 512.427.7116 HC
dhmarks@comerica.com

Church Consulting

Upright Ministries

uprightministries.com

Patti Malott 281.374.9506
patti@uprightministries.com

Credit Card & ACH Processing

MinistryLINQ

Ministrylinq.com

Krystal Weaver 800.811.7826
kweaver@cashlinq.com

FOOD SERVICE

SYSCO/PointSOURCE

info@PointSOURCEservices.com

Dieter Kadoke 214.336.0935
dkadoke@PointSOURCEservices.com

INSURANCE

Insurance One Agency

insuranceco-op.com

Gary Benson 800.896.8218 HOU
garyb@insuranceoneagency.com
Ricky McCrary 800.364.1277 DFW
rick@insuranceoneagency.com

Mark Davis - Healthy America

healthyamerica.biz

Mark Davis 713.444.3844 HOU
mdavis924@sbcglobal.net

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Computer Systems

IT Fidelity

itfidelity.com

Mike Beckham 832.476.3188
Mdavis924@sbcglobal.com

Computer Equipment & Software

Tech Depot

cssi.techdepot.com

D'Anne Wagner 888.903.2262
dwagner@techdepot.com

Internet Accountability Software

Covenant Eyes, Inc.

covenanteyes.com

Scott McClurg 877.479.1119 x 8016
smcclurg@covenanteyes.com

CO+OP Vendors

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First Baptist Church Huffman, Huffman, TX

First Baptist Church La Grange, La Grange, TX

First Baptist Church Richmond VA, Richmond, VA

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN

Prison Entrepreneurship Program, Houston, TX

Providence Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC

St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN

St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, TX

Trinity Episcopal Church, Ft Worth, TX

Trinity Life Baptist Church, Garland, TX

Waxahachie Bible Church, Waxahachie, TX

Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster, AL

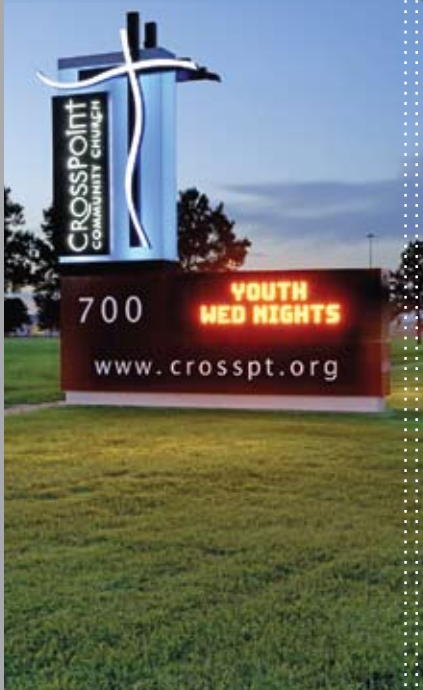


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