

Church Marketing 1

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Church Marketing: Promoting the Church Using Modern Methods

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Abstract

Marketing is a part of nearly every aspect of business. Without marketing, businesses would have very little means of communication. It is an essential part of promotion and growth. The same is true within the church. Churches often stray from advertising for a variety of reasons, but marketing and promotion can be a very effective way of fulfilling the Great Commission in a new, unique, and modern way.

This thesis will illustrate important steps in developing a communications plan for the marketing of local church. Research was done on existing marketing plans in both the business and church setting. The end goal of this thesis is to show that marketing can benefit the church and is truly Biblical at its very core.

Church Marketing: Promoting the Church Using Modern Methods

As society has grown in complexity, competition for public favor has become far more difficult to achieve. This difficulty has led to the development of the social science called integrated marketing communications, which seeks to bring about an understanding between any group and its public as to the purpose and function of that group and to persuade the public of the group's message.

The role of communication in a business, or any organization, is the cornerstone that everything is built upon. Disanza and Legge (2005) write, "A person's success in business or professional career depends in large measure on the ability to communicate with others" (p. 1). Without communication, an organization cannot function. The purpose of any organization is in some way to communicate information. Whether that information is the effectiveness of a product or the quality of service, every company or organization communicates something.

The church is no exception. There is a message to be communicated, not because it will raise more money or because it will increase awareness, but because it forms the very foundation of our lives. It is what we live for and why we do what we do. In today's society, it is necessary for the church to do more than just talk. The church must act. Words are empty, especially in advertising, if they are not backed by actions. The church seems to have a grasp on action within the church. It is not difficult to produce a crowd for a church-wide event or service, but what the world needs is for the church to become active outside its own walls (Stuber, 1951).

The church has something that the world needs: Jesus Christ. Marketing is not be for personal gain. The church should market because the information that is within is something that the world truly must know about. Life itself depends on it!

Churches have never really lacked for public relations. Throughout the history of time, churches have been running public relations promotions, advertising, and creating marketing plans. Media coverage does not seem absent at the most inopportune times; however, intentional advertising seems to be a more difficult topic for churches to tackle. It is often a shot in the dark as audiences are broad and difficult to define. Most churches can run a promotion that will fill the sanctuary and increase the budget, but these occurrences seem to be short-lived and lack lasting inspiration (Harral, 1945).

Churches do not have the luxury of assuming that they are communicating effectively with their communities in this day and age. There are so many different avenues for people to find a system of beliefs that the church is fighting just to have a voice. An assumption that the church is effectively communicating when it is not could actually be the very thing that creates a barrier between the church and those it is trying to reach.

It is vital that the church have an understanding of the role of communication so as to reach its audience where it is. In some aspects, the church must function as a business in order to be productive.

In *Quoting God*, the author writes, “Christianity has probably paid more attention than any other to communication” (Badaracco, 2005, p. 233). The author goes on to support this point by quoting the Great Commission found in Matthew 28 as the cornerstone of the mission of Christians. Communication is a huge part of the church and

Christianity regardless of whether it is recognized as such. It seems that many Christians are afraid of the “secular lingo” that is tied to communications because it implies wrong meanings. Words such as public relations, advertising, and marketing are taboo in a world that depends solely on the Bible to speak for itself. While the Word of God has every ability to speak for itself and clearly define its own message, the Lord has equipped Christians to follow His command in the Great Commission and to use given talents and resources to do so.

Integrity

Integrity plays a key role in the successful completion of many communication ideas or projects. For example, an entire advertising campaign could be designed around a concept that is false, however, if it is appealing to the consumer, it is considered a good advertisement. Integrity does not always make the best friend of success in many marketing situations. Maintaining integrity is important not only for one’s personal character but also for the sake of one’s company and the consumer’s ability to trust in that organization.

In a church, integrity in communication will form an especially large part of effective public relations and advertising. Not only are people looking for answers and decisions, but they are searching for truth. Nonbelievers often attend church with the purpose of finding answers in life. They do not come to a church with the intent of being persuaded into something that is untrue. It is important for a public relations professional in a church to send the initial appeal of the church and present the many reasons as to why a visitor would desire to visit. These ideas should be well thought out and honest presenting the facts and truths that represent all that the church is. Once the person has made the

decision to attend the church, it is important that the church use the objectives that were formed to present the truth of its message and fulfill its goals as followers of Christ.

Integrated Marketing Communications

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is defined as follows: “The process of using promotional tools in a unified way so that a synergistic communications effect is created” (Semenik, 2002, p. 560). Plainly stated, IMC brings together all aspects of communication to achieve a final goal that would not be possible without combining the various elements. This definition clearly shows the purpose of combining marketing, advertising, public relations and other aspects of communications to achieve a common goal of clear communication.

Meaning is taken away from every situation, event or conversation. Preconceived notions develop into actual thoughts and are assigned to different topics. These meanings are what determine the effectiveness of communication. They interpret words and bring understanding to thoughts.

Shared meaning occurs when two people interpret an experience or event in the same way. This happens quite often. Shared meaning can develop independently or simultaneously. Either way, this shared meaning plays a crucial part in the communication of an organization.

Disanza and Legge (2005) define communication as, “an exchange of messages between individuals for the purpose of creating or influencing the meaning that others assign to events” (p. 5). This definition shows a broader term of communication that acts as an umbrella to public relations and advertising. It is important to understand this definition in order to grasp the synergistic effect of communications as a whole.

Public Relations

Public relations is a term that is often viewed with a negative connotation mainly because the most popular form of public relations is crises communication. People only seem to notice the public relations department when something goes wrong. This, however, is not at all the case. There are so many different aspects of public relations that go into any organization on a daily basis. Although basic public relations principles are standard, the methods and reality of these principles are very different. Webster (1998) defines public relations as follows: “the actions of a corporation, store, government, individual, etc., in promoting goodwill between itself and the public, the community, employees, customers, etc.” (*Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, 1998, p. 1563).

Cutlip (1964) defines public relations as “the conscious effort to motivate or influence people, primarily through communication, to think well of an organization, to respect it, to support it, and to stick with it through trial and trouble” (p. 4). This promotion of goodwill may not directly express a call to action, but in partnership with marketing and advertising, public relations seeks to support where advertising seeks to persuade.

There are many other descriptions that could accurately define public relations. However, these definitions share several common characteristics. Motivation of others, acceptance and understanding, communication and a decided approach are all a part of effective public relations.

While many could view public relations in a church as a very small part of everything that goes on, it is actually one of the most important aspects of church ministry. Bringing

together professional communication and ministry will help the church to effectively grow and relate a message that is inherently filled with the message of Jesus Christ.

Williams (1985) states, “Every organization by its mere existence has public relations. Only the quality of those relations- good, bad or indifferent- may be unknown to the members of that organization” (p. 13). As this quotation clearly states, every organization, including churches, have public relations. Instead of questioning why a church would need public relations, perhaps a better inquiry would be how does a church make public relations planned and intentional?

There are several reasons why a church needs planned public relations. Ultimately, the goal of a church impacts local families, friends, neighborhoods, communities and even our world. Each individual church has a different mission statement or specific goal, but the overall purpose should be the same. Planned public relations promotes the body of believers and their goals. Craig (1977) states, “Public relations in its truest sense is the practice of telling and living the truth with a group of people in order to ultimately secure a favorable response (p. 10).

Teaming public relations and advertising brings together a synergistic communications effect that many businesses and churches are already using. There are several key parts to making the public relations and the advertising come together. Different aspects of these topics form the communications effect that can make or break an organization, including a church.

Advertising

Advertising is primarily a method of persuasion. It can be a very effective tool for communicating vital information and informing consumers about something they truly must know.

When an advertisement is placed for a product or service, it is an attempt to persuade the consumer that the given product is the best there is. While there may be slightly different interpretations of what is seen in the advertisement, the goal of the advertiser is to create an overall shared meaning of a need for that given product.

The same is true in the church. As events, services, or even opportunities are marketed, the overall idea is to communicate a common meaning. The goal is to produce a response. This shared meaning is a basic principle in the art of communication, but it is vital to success.

Often advertisers address consumers from the perspective of a problem. The product being sold will solve whatever problem the consumer may have. This form of advertising has been used for years and is arguably quite effective.

S. Van Eman, a practitioner in the area of church advertising, proposes a new and interesting perspective on advertising. Van Eman describes the art of Kokoyakyu, which is a form of baseball very popular in Japan. The difference in this sport and those often seen in America is that this sport revolves around the team's strength rather than the opponent's weakness. Van Eman (2008) quotes a Kokoyakyu coach saying, "Sport is like martial arts. We don't aim to expose our opponent's weaknesses but to exert our potential strengths. Our opponent is not the enemy" (p. 1).

If advertisers took this perspective when appealing to consumers, it might prove to show the true worth of a brand or product. The integrity of the brand being promoted is maintained when it does not aim to demean the consumer, but rather, show its value. The church can apply this principle by promoting the benefits of having a church family for support. If the only advertisements consumers see about a church revolves around human weakness and inadequacy, there would be very little motivation to visit.

Advertising is often frowned upon in the church because of the psychological misconceptions that can follow the term “advertising.” It is often thought of as a manipulative means of convincing people they need something that they really do not. Obviously, this is not always the case. Advertising can be helpful and informative, however, the stereotype is often true as well. A company’s goal is to convince the consumer that the product is a must-have.

Methods of Advertising

Advertising can be expensive; however, it pays. The return of investment cannot be beat if it is done well and truly creates shared meaning. Many firms find it profitable to spend thousands or even millions of dollars each year to publicize products, events or brands. Familiarity is the best friend of any company. Consumers are not likely to purchase a product they have never heard of. Brand awareness is a basic technique in advertising that is essential to building a solid name that consumers will recognize.

Branding. The church should seek to create an image within the community. Companies often use the term “branding” to describe the logo or image that they hope to instill in the minds of the community. Building rapport within the community will build one’s image. Dunkin (1982) says that churches should create a “faith image.” He defines

this image as one that projects what the church hopes to be (p. 50). It is based on Hebrews 11:1 which states, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (NIV). The idea behind this image is fulfilling an aspiration. If the idea is to be a booming church that is family-friendly and missions-minded, then projecting such an image in the eyes of a community will help the church develop into this idea. It is important, however, to follow-through with the projection of the church. A church cannot be projected as a welcoming church and then have greeters with frowns at every door. Fulfilling a “faith image” requires faith as well as actions. There must be integrity, an agreement between image and actions.

Many churches shy away from advertising because they do not know how to do it properly. Mail-outs, bulletin boards, and the Sunday bulletin seem to be the extent of many churches’ advertising departments. Each of these things can play a key role in communicating important information, but they should be given much thought and consideration. To walk into a church and be handed a poorly prepared bulletin that is not visually stimulating gives consumers an immediate first impression that can be difficult to overcome. Taking time to put together a well thought-out bulletin communicates a passion for your church and its activities.

Mail-outs. The same is true of mail-outs and even bulletin boards. Mail-outs are a commonly used method of communicating upcoming events. For those who are not already loyal to your church, a sloppy or unattractive newsletter would provide little motivation for attendance. A specialist in graphics or visual media could help to provide a letter that is eye-catching, informative, and effective (Barrows, 1962).

Bulletin boards. Indoor bulletin boards are a typical decoration at any church. Too often they seem to hold the same design for years at a time. Taking time to think out what would effectively communicate your message to any person who might potentially enter your doors would greatly contribute to the overall aesthetic of the building as well as communicate needed information. Bulletin boards should not be overlooked and brushed off without heed. They can truly be effective in communicating information and adding decoration to otherwise empty walls. Consider the theme of colors and feeling of the church building. Design the bulletin boards to keep with the flow of the church. Make sure that they are updated on a regular basis. Perhaps asking for a volunteer that has experience with graphic or design work to keep the bulletin boards up to date would keep a staff member from becoming overwhelmed by a constant task and would allow the church members to take some responsibility within the church. It is an excellent way to get them involved.

The commodities or fascination that modern companies advertise and promote will never provide the lasting satisfaction of the one thing the church seeks to promote at its core. Obviously the church does not have the monetary possessions to compete with modern businesses because churches do not function for profit. This is not reason, however, to overlook basic advertising principles that can help the church promote its purpose (Edwards, 1970).

When asked if advertising pays, Johnson (1962) writes as follows:

Not if you write in the sky on a cloudy day, distribute handbills to the birds' nests in the neighborhood, paste a 24-sheet billboard poster on the reverse side, garble a radio or TV message, mail a well-written letter to a list of names

whose only addresses are on the tombstones in a cemetery—or in any other way misuse advertising. (p. 52)

This comical description of misused advertising is an accurate depiction of what often happens in advertising due to poorly managed programs. While this is an obvious hyperbole, the idea is simple. Effective advertising revolves around advertising to the right audience in the right way. Deciding who that is and how to do that is a bit more complicated, but an examination of what true communication is gives a clearer picture of how to use it effectively.

Objectives

An effective objective is a vital part of any organization's communication. As has already been established, the goal of communication is most often persuasion. Persuasion is accomplished through a common objective.

There are several different ways of creating an objective. The important thing is that there is one and it is purposeful and effective. In the *Christian Communicator's Handbook*, Craig (1977) describes six steps to creating an effective church objective.

The first step in writing an objective, according to Craig, is to discuss the question, "What is the purpose of the church?" There must be an evaluation of why God created the church and what is its reason for existence. There must be an understanding of the reason for the church's being as this will form the foundation of its objective.

Step two is to write a tentative statement of objectives. Often the finalized objective will be the combination of several objectives made into one. The objectives should reflect why the church exists and part of what it hopes to accomplish.

The third step is to test the objective statements. While it is vitally important that the heart of the church is seen through the objective, it can only be clearly communicated through a well thought out and clear, understandable objective statement. As in all communication, it is important that the audience can understand what is trying to be communicated. The purpose must be communicated through the objective. Fancy words and fluff will not accomplish the overall goal of communicating the church's message. The objective should give the church direction for future action. It is important that the objectives move the church toward its goals rather than restrain it.

Step four is to circulate the objectives for review. Several groups or persons should discuss and review the objectives. Having several people review it will allow diverse and different perspectives to be aired.

Step five is to revise the objectives. After an intense evaluation of the objectives, revisions should be considered. These revisions will help to fine tune any details that need to be made clear.

The sixth and final step is to present the objectives to the church for discussion and adoption. It is crucial that the church understands and accepts the objectives. The whole group should be in agreement as to the purpose of the church. If they are not all working towards a common goal, they cannot accomplish their common purpose, nor can they head to a future that is productive and effective (Craig, 1977).

Audience

Church communication is much different in today's culture than it was a hundred, fifty, or even twenty years ago. Effective advertising and public relations must be ever changing with society. There are certainly basic principles that remain timeless, but with new advances in technology, it is crucial that marketing changes and advances with the times as well. In order to know how to reach a given audience, one must first know who that audience is.

In all aspects of communication, it is important to consider the audience. If the audience does not understand, the message has missed its purpose. Audience analysis is key to deciding what to say and how to communicate it. Audience analysis includes evaluating situation variables. These might include occasion, audience size, organizational culture, environment, and time considerations (Disanza and Legge, 2005).

Today's churches often revolve around the audience that attends. It is not uncommon to have a variety of churches in a small area that have completely different services on a weekly basis. One church might be geared towards college students with a Christian rock band and a young pastor with edgy sermons. The building, location, and even staff would probably be geared toward that audience.

A church right down the street might be geared toward a different audience. The music might be composed mostly of hymns and the pastor more traditional never caught without a suit and tie. Neither one of these is right or wrong as long as they are both acting biblically and following the Word of God, but it is important in the world of communication to understand that these two are completely different and should be approached in completely different ways.

The church that is geared toward college students might use email newsletters whereas the more traditional church might use the postal service as its most effective form of communication. Either way, it is crucial that the communications director at both locations understands the audience and work with that in mind.

It is important for a communications professionals working in a church to understand the effective forms of communication. A church that functions more traditionally would not spend as much of its budget on a media director or a webmaster to manage its website. The money would be better spent invested in personal relations and brochure mail-outs.

Churches geared toward an audience that surfs the internet daily would do better to invest money in someone who can effectively run the website and use web relations to communicate. The bottom line of effective communication is knowing and understanding the audience. In a church, the same message should be communicated whether it is done online or through the bulletin. The issue is not how it is distributed, but rather, the effectiveness of the message and its delivery.

Technology

Communications plans vary from organization to organization and from church to church. As previously discussed, understanding one's demographic is the key to understanding what the most effective form of communication will be. One form of communication that is growing exponentially and being used more often in all organizations, including churches, is technology. The advances in technology have created possibilities that were unheard of twenty or even ten years ago.

According to Wilson, generations are becoming more visually oriented due to contemporary media than previous generations. Feeling and instinct are valued over reason. The Gospel requires much more than simply an emotional response. However, emotions can be used as a vehicle to present the Word of God. Using new media and technology, churches can better reach a younger generation that faces these new stimuli on a daily basis in the secular world. The church has been entrusted with the task of communicating the truths of the Word of God. Using these feelings that can speak through the whole man is one way of effectively understanding one's audience and applying planned public relations in a church (Wilson, 1975).

While some churches prefer more traditional ways that involve less technology, many are embracing these advances and using them as an effective form of reaching an audience that has become acquainted with and completely familiar with technology and its ever changing pace.

Creating a Workable Plan

According to Kiser (1992), six steps will help a church create a workable plan. These steps outline the effective measures to consider when creating an integrated marketing communications plan.

Step one is to define the target audience. Every church will have a different audience due to location, programs, size, and ministries. Depending on the purpose of the plan, the audience can be defined narrowly or broadly. The more narrow the target, the more pointedly you can prepare promotion.

Keep in mind that the congregation may be one of your largest targets. The outside world will be difficult to reach if you have not first taken care of what is on the inside.

Kiser (1992) writes, “A wise planner records the demographics—general information such as where to live, median ages, sex, marital status—and psychographics—attitudes interests, and opinions. These tools help tell us to whom we are targeting our approach and, in turn, help us to do a better job” (p. 52).

The second step, according to Kiser (1992), is to define the problem. The problem could range from apathy in the congregation to lack of funds. Each church will face different problems at different times, but it is important to define the problem and establish it as such so as to set goals that will lead you to fixing the problem.

Setting measurable goals is the third step in this plan. In all goal setting, it is important that the participants are aware of the purpose of the goal. If an objective is set to raise money for a building project, this goal is essentially achieved with the first dollar that is donated. Goals that are not measurable do not help to motivate the church to action.

The next step is to determine possible approaches. This step is similar to the implementation process that will be discussed further in the section on putting together a communications plan. The more a message is reinforced, the more likely someone will hear it and comprehend it. Deciding on multiple approaches to achieve a goal will help to determine the most effective and efficient way to use funds. In some cases, more than one method may be used to reinforce a message.

Step five is to determine visible events. While some projects can be promoted through discussions, most should be visible. Visible events will give everyone something to rally around. It is a tangible way to carry out promotion.

The sixth and final step is to plan supporting contacts. Promotion is the key to

advertising, and it is essential to achieving communications goals. Promoting something for a short period of time is an excellent idea, however if it is a constant problem, then it should be followed up on a regular basis. Find other departments within the church that can echo the ideas being promoted. The idea here is to essentially hit it from every angle.

Keeping all of these steps in mind, it is important to put everything down on paper. Writing down ideas and strategies gives them drive and purpose. The next few pages will discuss the specifics of writing a workable communications plan for a church (Kiser, 1992).

Examples of a Workable Plan

The following is a potential plan for the marketing of a church. As has already been discussed, it is important to have a plan laid out for the church. A business would not expect to successfully advertise without a laid out plan. A church cannot hope to promote its services or events without a defined plan. The following is an outline of what a promotion plan could look like for a church.

Mission Statement

It is important to set a goal for each individual project or event that is being advertised, but it is also important for the church as a whole. This goal could come in the form of a mission statement. Here are a few real examples of some mission statements that have been used by real churches in North America.

People's Church

200 West Grand River Avenue

East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Mission Statement:

People's Church is called to proclaim the Gospel of Christ and the beliefs of the evangelical Christian faith, to maintain the worship of God, and to inspire in all persons a love for Christ, a passion for righteousness, and a consciousness of their duties to God and their fellow human beings. We pledge our lives to Christ and covenant with each other to demonstrate His Spirit through worship, witnessing, and ministry to the needs of the people of this church and the community.

First CME Church

3600 MacInnes

Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Mission Statement:

Reaching out to the World...Preaching to the Unserved...Teaching the Saved to Serve.

Riverside Community Church

10301 Eagle River Loop Road

Eagle River, Alaska

Mission Statement:

At Riverside Community Church we're not about "having it all together" or even pretending we do. We're just a family trying to grow together toward a God who knows us and can help us put all the pieces of this sometimes bizarre world into

perspective. We may not have all the answers but we know someone who does. In fact He not only has the answers...He made up the questions.

New Hope Baptist Church

551 New Hope Rd.

Fayetteville, GA 30214

Mission Statement:

New Hope exists to enable people to become obedient followers of Jesus Christ.

As these statements illustrate, there are several different ways to clearly define a mission. The important thing is that it is clearly defined. This important step would never be overlooked in a business. A goal that is not set cannot be achieved. Some mission statements are long while others are short. Some encompass the singular goal of the church itself while others encompass several goals the church hopes to achieve. Either way, it is important to write a purposeful mission statement for a church.

A mission statement will typically remain the same for long periods of time. If the church undergoes a major change, shift in leadership or renovation, the mission statement might change to adjust to the changing congregation or purpose of the church. For the most part, however, this statement should be classic and traditional enough to withstand the shifting lingo of changing generations.

Objective Statement

While a mission statement will remain with the church for a period of time, specific project objectives will probably change as projects are created and completed. It is important

to set regular goals according to different plans that may arise. For example, if a church runs a promotion to increase awareness of small groups within the community, an objective statement might be formulated to define the purpose of that specific project. This is an important step because it sets a goal that can motivate action. Here are a few examples of objective statements that could apply to different projects.

Examples

Example 1: A church wants to raise money for a new youth building. The goal is to raise \$100,000 over the period of a year. An objective statement for this church could be written as follows:

Our goal is to increase our budget by 10% over the next year in order to achieve our goal of raising \$100,000 for the youth building project because we believe that creating an environment that is exciting for the youth will help us reach an audience that might not otherwise come to our facilities.

Example 2: A church wants to get the community more involved in small group Bible studies. They have decided to use door-to-door visitations as their method of advertising. An objective statement for this church could be written as follows:

Our goal is to reach our community through door-to-door visitations with the end goal being to increase attendance by 12% over the next six months. We do this because we believe that every person in our community needs to hear the message that we preach which is the love of God.

Guidelines. Every project that is created is different. An objective statement will almost never be the same for more than one project. There are, however, guidelines that should be followed when writing objective statements. These guidelines will help establish a clearly defined goal that can motivate action and bring reality to goals.

First, an objective should be unit-oriented. This basically means that an objective should be defined for the department that is to complete it. If the goal is set for the whole church, then it can be defined as such, however, if it is more specifically for certain departments of the church, it should be written in a way that that is clearly understood.

An objective should also be time-bounded. Giving an objective a time limit helps to make it attainable. If there is no time period by which to have a task completed, it could essentially go on forever. This time frame will help set a pace and keep an objective from being worn out.

Next, an objective should be realistic. No one enjoys failing. Setting unrealistic objectives only invokes feelings of failure or dissatisfaction. Setting a goal that is attainable will help keep the church excited about given projects and focused on the end result. When the goal is achieved, the feeling of satisfaction will raise morale and support within the church.

Objectives should be measurable. If there is no way to measure the effectiveness of an objective, it will be difficult to establish whether it was accomplished. This point ties in with making objectives realistic. It is important to measure your outcomes to review whether the goal was accomplished.

Finally, objectives should be specific. Making specific objectives will help to focus the group as well as provide a clear purpose. Every individual has unique ideas that can be

beneficial to the overall goal of the church. However, these differing views can be conflicting if a specific task is trying to be accomplished. By writing an objective that is specific, it is easier to see and clearly define what you are hoping to accomplish. It will help put the church on the same page in a clearly defined objective (Parente, 2006).

Strategies

Strategies are another important part of the public relations within any organization, including the church. Strategies are basically the steps that are taken to get a church to its goal. Strategies are important because they define a path that will direct a church towards its end goal. They clearly set out what will be done to accomplish the end goal. Listing out the strategies can give a clear picture of what needs to be done to accomplish goals.

Strategies are statements that give a call to action. The following could be a list of potential strategies that a church might implement for promotion:

- Participate in the local fair to raise awareness of our services within the community.
- Set up weekly visitations to the houses in our community that visited our church.
- Partner with a local mission organization to support missionaries from our community.
- Send out weekly updates of upcoming special events and services.
- Hold a fundraising event to raise money for the Operation Christmas Child program.

Strategies are typically more specific than objectives. They give action to goals.

These strategies can be assigned to different departments or given to the whole church. The idea behind strategies is to show how objectives can be accomplished.

Implementation

Implementation is another important part of any communications plan. It is the follow-through of everything that has been established. Formulating objectives and writing strategies are essentially pointless if they are never used. Implementation is the process of completing the task. A plan might be devised that illustrates the specifics of what will be completed in the given time.

Evaluation

Finally, evaluation is an extremely important part of any communications plan. It is often overlooked because it does not always directly affect the audience. It is important, however, to evaluate what has been completed. Evaluation is possible because of the several steps that were discussed about strategies. Creating objectives that are measurable allows for evaluation. Evaluation is evidence of what has been completed. It can be a great way to motivate the church by giving praise for what has been completed. It can also be a great way to see what still needs to be done. Not reaching a goal the first time you set it is not the end of the world, but never reaching that goal does not accomplish your purpose. Evaluation should not be overlooked as it will serve as a great foundation of measurement for your whole plan.

Each of these things, mission statements, objectives, strategies, implementation and evaluation, plays a vital role in the communications for any church. Together these steps form a plan that will bring organization and purpose to ideas.

The line between a ministry and a business can seem blurry at times if viewed from the wrong angle. The information presented here has been approached mostly from the business side of things. Church marketing can be a difficult subject for many because it

seems “blasphemous,” perhaps even something Jesus would turn a table at as He did in Matthew 21. There is evidence throughout the Bible, however, that supports the idea of excellence. In this changing generation, excellence will not be achieved by ineffective, out-of-date methods. The message of Jesus Christ and His love for mankind must be the driving force that motivates every promotion, advertisement and marketing strategy that a church engages in. Apart from Christ, the church ceases to exist. Marketing is simply a way to give a method to the idea of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19: “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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (NIV). Churches must learn to function with the excellence of a business, but with the attitude of Christ.

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