

MinistryTech

2017

DESIGNING GOALS FOR MINISTRY TECH TEAMS

Setting the Stage for the New Year

- >> WHAT WORKS IN CHURCH COMMUNICATION
- >> TECH ETIQUETTE FOR 2017
- >> ONE PASTOR'S BATTLE WITH HIS IPHONE



Figure It Out: What Works in Church Communication

This year, try tracking your effectiveness

Church communicators have been entrusted with the words of eternal life. As partners with the preaching and teaching ministries of the church, we have tremendous responsibilities and we want to do the best we can to fulfill them. With that in mind, here are four suggestions to help you be more effective as church communicators in the coming year, along with a link to a free e-book that will help your church grow through improving your church communications.

1 Evaluate last year's church communications program.

Far too many churches never take time to evaluate the success of what they are currently doing and so they have no idea what to do to make it more effective.

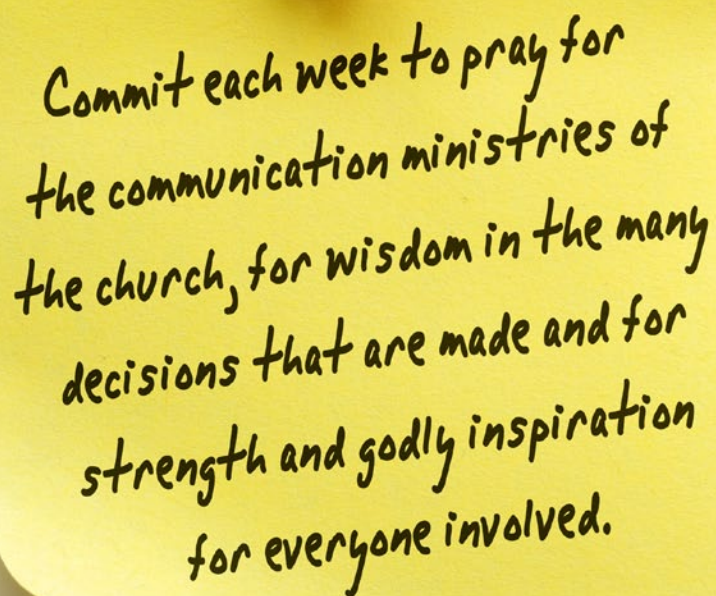
This is often the case when a new way of communicating is adapted and people are so busy simply learning new systems they don't bother to check out how well these are working to bring new people to the church or to involve people in the ministries of the church that help them grow to mature disciples.

One area especially important to track is social media. If you have no idea how your church is doing in this area, you aren't alone. The [2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report](#) stated:

"Though many marketers are using social networks to promote their sites, not all of them actually know what they are doing . . . the vast majority of marketers are either not doing very well on social media, or

they are not getting the results they would like."

To evaluate your marketing efforts, make a chart that lists the various activities and ministries you want people to attend. Then across the top list the various ways to communicate it: through printed bulletins and postcards, bulletin inserts and flyers, through digital media including your website, emails, social media. Mark the times you use each method and finally record the attendance at the event. Vary the ways you communicate about an event or ministry and after a few months of recording, you should have a better idea of what works for your church—and what doesn't. Commit to careful tracking in 2017 and it will help you make wise decisions in coming years.



Commit each week to pray for the communication ministries of the church, for wisdom in the many decisions that are made and for strength and godly inspiration for everyone involved.

The take-away from these quotes is that as you plan your communications for the coming year, remember we live in a time of multi-channel communication of BOTH/AND, not either/or. If you find you've done away with some of your print ministry and you aren't getting the response you want to events, add a postcard, a flyer, more information in the bulletin, and track to see if it makes a difference.

Don't argue about what works best, track it and make a professional decision.

For an extended report on my results from this and related research, I'm giving away a free e-book or PDF of the report I did on this topic. Click the link that follows to go to it: [Declining church attendance and how your communications can help turn that around.](#)

2 Re-balance your marketing channels. Even without evaluation, many churches are moving to digital communications and away from printed communications. However, this shift has not always brought about the response many churches hoped for. I recently did a large research project on this topic that was inspired by an advertisement from Outreach Marketing (the parent company of this publication). The ad stated something about the effectiveness of print (in this case postcards) over digital marketing. They quoted a statistic that seemed hard to believe, but I checked out the citation and here it is:

Direct mail outperforms all digital channels by nearly 600%. (2015 DMA Response Rate Report)

I was amazed! Additional research verified similar statistics. There are lots of reasons for this, but one conclusion is that many marketers have mistaken popularity for effectiveness. Yes, lots of people may be on Instagram and Facebook, but that doesn't mean in the flow of all the updates on friends, gossip and events that they will even notice or act on your church post that will be lost in the stream of disappearing posts.

In contrast, another quote from *Inc.* magazine stated:

"People receive so many digital messages all day now, while their stack of mail is getting smaller and smaller. . . A direct mail piece stands out. It gets noticed, it gets read, and its offers and coupons get used."

3 Make sure your technology assets match your goals. Many churches assume that somehow no matter what goals are set the people who do the communications work in the church will be able to make it happen, even if their computer hasn't been updated in five years and there's no budget for adequate software or training.

Obviously, this is neither realistic nor kind. Usually the person doing the communication work knows exactly what they need to do their job. Ask them, and then commit to finding the funds for it! Many churches have been successful in upgrading the equipment and resources for their communications ministry by asking for designated donations rather than trying to get

an increase in the overall budget.

Designated funds typically come from a member in the congregation who has a heart for a specific ministry and doesn't see it supported enough. It can be any concern: a video system for the church communications overall; print resources so that seniors always get a printed newsletter and other updates; social media training for a youth pastor. Whatever it might be don't expect great things from your church communication staff if they are under resourced.

4 Pray for wisdom in how to most effectively apply what you've evaluated and learned.

If we are going to communicate with God's blessing and the power of the Holy Spirit in the coming year, we must take time with our Lord and listen to His voice above all else in our church communications.

Commit each week to pray for the communication ministries of the church, for wisdom in the many decisions that are made, and for strength and godly inspiration for everyone involved. Church communications is a challenging ministry, but in every challenge, you can rely on the promise in James 1:2-5 (TLB):

Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So, let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character,

full and complete.

If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask him; he will not resent it.

Knowing you can trust your Lord every step of the way, charge into 2017 with excitement and joy! **MT**

>>>Be sure to download your free e-book or PDF: [Declining church attendance and how your communications can help turn that around.](#)

Yvon Prehn is the founder and director of Effective Church Communications, effective-churchcom.com, a ministry that helps churches create communications that help fulfill the Great Commission. She has been writing and teaching about church communications for over 20 years. Her latest book is The Five Steps of Effective Church Communication and Marketing.

Are your church communications accomplishing all you want them to?

Yvon Prehn's new book can help you organize your communications into a 5-Step process that takes unchurched people and moves them step-by-step to become mature disciples of Jesus.

- INVITE
- INFORM
- INCLUDE
- INSTRUCT
- INSPIRE

THE 5 STEPS OF EFFECTIVE CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

To enable your church fully fulfill the Great Commission

Yvon Prehn

e-book format at www.effectivechurchcom.com

print format at www.amazon.com