

CHURCH @ CHURCH

Communications Social Media

Our vision is to 'REACH THE CITY, REACH THE WORLD' with the Gospel of Jesus.

CONNECT to God through trusting in Jesus' death on the cross for your sins, and connect to church.

GROW in your relationship with Jesus and others following him, especially through a Growth Group.

SERVE Jesus and others according to their needs, especially a Ministry Team.

This MINISTRY PAPER is designed to help you think about how you and your church use social media.

Social Media works

Social media is an inescapable part of communicating in the modern world. It is tempting to post your sermon recordings, and a few bible verse memes, but does this really engage people in your story – in the story of God in the world, the story your church is telling through every other channel?

One Easter, we put up ads on Facebook for our Easter services. It reached approximately 6000 people.

One guy, who wouldn't have called himself a Christian, saw our posts and commented about the ad. One of our pastors engaged him in a conversation online, and then invited him to meet up for a drink and a conversation face to face.

That guy now calls himself a believer, and is faithfully regular at church. All from seeing a Facebook ad about Easter.

I guess the take home from this is, social media can really work in engaging people in the Gospel, but you need to be prepared to engage face to face as well.

7 tips for using social media as a Christian

Remember that you are God's Social Media – when God made man in his image, he was making us to represent him in the world - that God should be made known through us, and through our connection with him and with others. We're his representatives in his world, re-created in Christ to re-represent him.

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. — 2 CORINTHIANS 3:3

Don't worship, or become an image of, anything else - When posting on social media, it is all too common to make posts about us, about our lives. We actually end up worshipping ourselves, or some aspect of our lives (our family, our job etc).

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. — ROMANS 12:2

Share Jesus - If we are communication mediums for whatever we worship, then the way we use mediums will reflect who we are, and communicate what it is we worship. If someone looked at your social media accounts, who would they say you worship? Our posts should show who we are "in Christ Jesus."

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. — ROMANS 1:20

You are not the centre - The Gospel calls us to re-centre ourselves, and our lives, and our thoughts about others to make Jesus the subject, and the centre of reality, and to point people to him, not ourselves. Do your posts serve yourself, or your reader?

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others— PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

Don't fight – Nothing looks worse on social media than you arguing with, and grumbling about, other Christians. We're actually called to be God's image bearing 'social media' together, and through our relationships with each other find our identity in Christ. Arguing and grumbling undermines and so destroys this 'image'.

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. — PHILIPPIANS 2:14-16

Online is good, offline is better - What are some ways we can use social media to anticipate or invite face to face contact, even if they're global relationships?

I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. — 2 JOHN 1:12

Tell real stories – Often we craft a persona on social media – it is who we WANT to be. But this can often lead to inauthenticity and fakeness, and nothing turns people off quicker than fakeness. Make sure your stories are real – the ups and the downs. But in everything make sure your stories point to how God has worked through the story.

Many voices make light work

When thinking about church social media, it's tempting to appoint one person as your social media person. The problem is, that the voice of your social media becomes the voice of that one person.

Have a think about some people – they may be on staff, elders, or just mature brothers and sisters in your congregation – who may be able to help you with posting on social media (on Facebook you can make them contributors, editors, or admins.)

A word of warning: while you may try to separate your work and your personal social media profiles, by the very nature of your work, your character is on display whether you post for work or personal. Social Media should always show your personal life to be congruous with your professional life. If you are asking church members to help with social media, this is an important point for them to also understand.

Page Insights

On Facebook, social media buffs will talk about measuring your Reach, Page views, Likes, and Engagements – measuring your page insights. But what does it all mean? And how can you use it to measure how well your social media is doing?

Reach – the number of people who had your post appear on their screen. This can happen through them liking/following your page, through them being told their friends like/follow your page, or through their friends sharing it. Reach gives you an idea of how many people are seeing your content.

Page views – this is how many times your page was viewed by someone on Facebook.

RESOURCES

Church2Church Communications Survival Kit:

- Communications Ministry Paper
- Simple Communication Strategy Template

A picture paints a thousand words

So you've figured out why and how to post in social media, but the question "what" now rears its head.

In the fast moving world of social media, where a swipe is all it takes to move on, it seems logical to make your content as reader friendly as possible.

Pictures are engaging, and what takes thousands of words to say (and thus for your readers to read) can be said in just one or 2 pictures. Always try to include pictures that help tell the story – who, or what, is God working through to tell your story.

In terms of what stories to tell, this should largely be set out in your communication strategy – if you haven't got a communication strategy, see Resources for information on help developing one.

As mentioned in the Communications Ministry Paper, we have one of the best stories to tell – God at work in His world – try to use social media to tell this story.

Post Engagement – this is how many times someone engaged with your content. An engagement is generally a 'like', a 'share' or a 'comment'. Engagement gives a better idea of how your content is reaching people in a meaningful way. The more people engage with your content, the more Facebook algorithms see it as worthy and interesting, and thus your content is more likely to appear in people's feeds

Actions on Page – if you have calls to action set up on your facebook page (a website link, a phone number, or other action), this shows as an 'action on page'. This will give you an idea of conversion rate – who saw your facebook stuff and wanted to know more.

Communicators by design
Humans are communicators, by nature, social beings. We tell each other stories as a means of getting to know one another. We build relationships through reciprocal story telling.

Have you ever met someone at a social gathering, and found they knew you almost through sharing your own story? Perhaps a friend of a friend, or even a stranger, watching them, listening to them, and telling them.

You might tell a story about your cat, and find out you have a story about the cat that sits on your head and fluffs its hair into a ball in the living room. You might tell me something about your job, and find out I know someone who works in your industry. You might tell me about your family, and find out I know someone who works in your industry.

As you know, however, the layers get thick and deep, and we know more.

The experience through the layers is reciprocal vulnerability through story telling.

When we think about 'communications' in our churches, we often think of telling the congregation about the upcoming church event, or prayer needs within our church. But what if we think communications with an outward focus?

We have the greatest story ever told... yet when it comes to sharing it with those who don't know it, we often don't know where to start. And then communications either become a neglected part of our ministry, or we give it a half-hearted go with little thought or strategy.

In the book of Matthew, the word 'tell' is used 84 times; in the book of Acts it appears 22 times (NIV) – you get the idea that telling people about Jesus – communicating the gospel – is something we are called to do.

"So, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life." – Acts 17:17

It is hoped that this is happening in Sunday Services, but in the context of the 10,000 minute service – the service that encompasses our whole needs – we should be telling people about Jesus throughout the week as well.

Because we are story telling beings, one of the best ways to share stories with people is telling stories. For example, we all have a story of how God has worked in our lives. Our church is made up of stories of God's work in lives. Each day, stories are being lived out, that tell of God's work in the world – from the growth group that meets in the hall, to the people who serve by mowing the lawn at church. Each and every moment in the day is part of the story of God at work.

Telling each of these stories is showing people outside the church the goodness of God as he works through his people. It gives people outside the church a glimpse at the beautiful community that exists within the church.

But telling these stories isn't just to show people outside the church a glimpse of God's community at work – it also serves to encourage those within the church. It builds a sense of community, and helps people feel connected.

Simple Church Communication Strategy
A church communication strategy is one of the most overlooked tools in ministry. But having a good, simple strategy in place helps you be more effective in your communication. This template takes you through 5 key definitions that will help you be more intentional and effective in your communications. And then provides a table to set out your strategies.

Communication problems
What are the problems you are having to solve with your communications? You may have several problems, or just one. In defining them, try to stick to a single problem for each bullet point.

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Aims and objectives
What are you trying to achieve by communicating? Again, you may have several, or just one. Try to be specific and measurable in your aims and objectives. This will help you to better resource the success of the strategy.

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Target markets
These messages will be received by different target markets. They may have different needs, and different channels (media). Try to be as specific as you can about your target markets – this will help you define the best messages to tell, and the best media to distribute the messages.

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Key messages
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List your Target Markets here	List what messages you want to tell them here
20 youth	The benefits of youth growth groups

Communication Channels
Channels are the way your message might appear. It is largely dictated by what target markets you're trying to reach. Think about how your target markets communicate, that will give you the key to finding the best channels.

List your communication channels here	List what target markets you will reach here
44 Instagram	youth, young adults

Simple Church Communication Strategy worksheet