



Focusing Your Congregational Communication

By Rajkumar Dixit

How do your church members get information? Is everything communicated through the bulletin or announcements at church? Or do you communicate with your congregation through email, blogs, phone trees, snail mail, etc.? During a recent leadership retreat, the New Hope church team performed an informal audit of our congregational communication. We discovered that we were using over twenty-seven modes of communication!

We were trying to please everybody. Some members didn't have access to email or text message capability. Others ignored their snail mail. However, our attempts to reach different people in so many different ways wasted time, money, and human resources. So our staff developed some new strategies to streamline and give purpose to our communication efforts.

These are some steps you can take to make sure your communication efforts are effective and efficient:

1. **Consider your demographics.** Twitter and Facebook are great social media formats. While they are the latest buzzwords on the market, they may not be suitable within your context. Is your congregation tech-savvy? Consider the age breakdown. If your church is mainly older, you may want to focus on paper and oral forms of communication. If it is blended, consider cross marketing with paper and electronic media.
2. **Prune sources of output.** We decided to limit our church communication to five methods. Based on our demographics, we focused our attention on our website (lookingforachurch.org), Facebook, bulletin, e-blast, and community life (announcement time). Because it was hard for us to give up mailings, we limit them to two times a year, Easter and Christmas.
3. **Don't limit information to one venue.** Once you have decided on the most effective communication channels for your congregation, use all these formats to their best advantage. If you took the time to write a "focus on a new member" article, use the same article in your paper newsletter, e-newsletter, Facebook note, and church website. "Reprinting" your news in each of your chosen communication methods will increase the likelihood that it will be read, especially since each different method will reach a slightly different constituency.

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