

# Eight Reasons People Aren't Listening to Announcements

**This weekend, all across the country, leaders are going to get up in front of their churches and talk about upcoming events and opportunities to connect with the community. They want to move people to action, but in reality a large portion of those in the room will simply tune out for that part of the service and then tune back in when something more interesting comes along. You know it's true ... because you've done it!**

We blame the people for not engaging in the mission. Sort of like a shepherd blaming the sheep for not going to the right pasture. We need to understand why people stop listening and then shift our behavior to help them connect with those we seek to serve. Here are eight reasons people aren't listening to announcements.

**There's nothing in it for them.** We want them to attend our event. We need volunteers for the upcoming thing. We have a need that we are hoping they will fill. We focus too much on what's in it for *us*, but people are intrinsically motivated to pay attention to things that will positively impact *them*. Frame your announcements in a way that shows how what you are talking about is going to make a difference to them.

**Too much insider language.** Why do church leaders love cute names for programs and use acronyms? These are surefire ways to alienate your audience because they need a dictionary to understand what all the different "special names" are for the events and programs at your church. Work hard to ensure that you use plain language that everyone can understand.

**You need to sell, not market.** Marketing is about making sure that people understand the features and benefits of your product or service. Sales is about working with people individually to overcome their objections and get them to sign on the dotted line. Who is the person who is going to talk to people directly about engaging in the effort?

**No heart.** Do you feel like yawning while you are doing the announcements? Imagine what the people are thinking! If you do not connect your message with their hearts every once in a while, they will stop listening. People want to know why you are passionate about the subject. Move beyond dates, times, and locations to the big "why" behind what you are talking about.

**Too much noise.** Every time you add another announcement, it reduces the likelihood of the announcements breaking through. Two announcements are 30 percent as effective as one. Three are 90 percent less effective than one. How are you ensuring that you are doing the minimal number of announcements possible to ensure maximum impact?

**Bad News Bill.** Is it always the same person from the finance team that gets up once a month to tell the church how much they are behind on offerings? People will learn to tune out that message quickly. If you are always the bearer of bad news, people will stop listening. Avoid using the public stage as the place to disseminate bad news.

**Wrong audience.** If you are announcing the upcoming hiker club trip to the wilderness on Tuesday afternoon that maybe two percent of the congregation could possibly attend, you are telling 98 percent of the people to ignore you. If your announcement does not impact 50 percent or more of the people in the room, why are you talking about it?

**Too much treadmill.** When was the last time you celebrated something fun that happened at your church? If you are always taking time to promote what's coming up next, you are missing an opportunity to engage (and reward) people who have been involved in something already at the church. Celebrate people and what they are doing. They will listen more.

*This article is by Rich Birch, pastor and blogger, and appeared in Leading Ideas February 25, 2015. Used by permission.*

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