

9 Tips for Social Media & the 21st Century Church

WHITE PAPER by The Execution Group

Overall Digital Media is a hugely missed opportunity for the Church—we want to help change this lack of digital activity within the Christian Community

Contents

Tip 1: Understand the Landscape 3

Tip 2: Begin with the End in Mind 3

Tip 3: Know Your Target Audience..... 3

Tip 4: Email Campaigns..... 4

Tip 5: Text Messaging 4

Tip 6: Facebook..... 4

Tip 7: Twitter & Your Pastoral Staff..... 5

Tip 8: A Pastoral Blog 5

Tip 9: Don't Overlook Your Website! 5

Interesting Facts about the Church and Social Media 5

 Key Performance Indicators..... 5

Why We Do What We Do?..... 7

"We can give life and dimension to the church via responsible Social Media; build community and disciples—evangelism at our fingertips!"

Social Media for the 21st Century Church

Studies show that even though it is more important than ever for churches to be using social media, they do so at alarmingly low rates. Recent studies show that churches are generally poor at connecting with people digitally. Reaching the multitude in the 21st century has become somewhat of a challenge for today's Churches, especially those that are not embracing the use of digital resources. With many annual budgets declining since the onset of the economic crisis, churches have been hard pressed to finding scalable resources outside of the traditional marketing tools to keep pace with the challenges of keeping people connected, inspired and motivated.

However, while there are churches across the nation that are shy to embrace social media marketing, Ministries like TD Jakes, Creflo Dollar, and Joel Osteen (to name a few) have embraced technology to keep pace of the ever-changing landscape of reaching the masses effectively and efficiently with great success. From customized apps, sign-up forms, inspirational posts, conversion pages, links to other social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, they have all invested a considerable amount of time and resources to connect using digital marketing as a key conduit in building and engaging an online kingdom community.

Tip 1: Understand the Landscape

Every ministry leader, employee, Deacon and/or Reverend can learn to use these tools for ministry. Before you venture out into the deep, understand where you are heading and set realistic expectations beforehand. You will be communicating with individuals and their entire network via the internet. As an ambassador of Christ, you want to make sure that you are authentic and transparent - if your church was a living, human, person, (which it is...) what would it say or be about? Determine the tone of your messaging and the type of content you want to share before you start to engage in social media.

The most difficult part about using social media is maintaining consistency. Too often an organization sets out to harness the power of social media but ultimately loses interest over time, often because they discover that it's more work than they had anticipated, or other pressing needs come up and the social media project falls through the cracks.

Tip 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Goal Setting

#	Accomplish	Measure Success	Deliverable
1	ANALYTICS – platform stats (Likes, shares, tweets, comments, followers, posts...etc.)	DATA/Intelligence Cell phone #'s, email addresses, customer service, donations	Test Products/services feedback, increase attendance, build awareness
2	Content & Engagement Calendar – 30 days	Social Media Team; content creation, posting/engagement	Social Media Properties are branded & Professional

Proverbs 24:27 states, *prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.* Know what you want to accomplish before you begin and establish milestones and benchmarks. What do you want to accomplish, how will you measure success, and what is your budget and timeline? Overall, you want to know what you want to accomplish and what the deliverable will look like for those accomplishments to be a success

Tip 3: Know Your Target Audience

70% of millennial's (that are practicing Christians) say they use a Smartphone or the internet to read scripture. (Source: Facts & Trends) However, Only 32% of churches use social media to get feedback from members. Of the churches that do use social media to get feedback, 17% have less than 150 members, 36% have

Embrace the Power of Social Media Share the Good News Every Day!

150-500 members, 16% have 500-1,000 members, and 31% have over 1,000 members. (Source: Buzzplant). Understand the platforms that your audiences use to engage in social media and meet them there.

Tip 4: Email Campaigns

Almost everyone these days has at least one email account. Email has become the preferred method of communication for personal and professional use in the 21st century digital age. So why not harness the power of this easy and quick tool to boost the church's contact with members and visitors?

Instead of mailing postcards to remind people of committee meetings and other church information, try using email as an reinforcement of information you want to share with the church when they visit your church on Sunday. Have members like and share your fan pages during service--it should only take a few minutes! Have them sign-up to receive your eblasts during service by opting in to your weekly, monthly or quarterly newsletter. Give visitors greeting cards and have them complete it and place in your offering buckets. Collect visitors email address and be sure to have them opt-in to send a follow-up message.

Email can be used to send messages to next Sunday's worship leaders, ushers, greeters, communion servers, Sunday school teachers or other leaders to remind them of their responsibilities. Create a weekly, brief message from the pastor or other church staff member or ministry leader announcing what will be happening in these next week's services and other ministry gatherings. This is ideal for music ministries, children's ministries (sent to parents) and youth ministries.

Use email to develop a list of prayer ministers and send the weekly prayer concerns electronically to this designated group. For the church on a very limited budget, there are places you can go to get a free email account. These are fine as long as the address is something that relates to the church and its ministries versus an individual. For example, you wouldn't want an email address that says "joesmithe@gmail.com". You want to be sure to brand your social properties including your email address for best mental recall.

Tip 5: Text Messaging

With more people migrating from email and computers to text messaging and cell phones, **especially youth and young adults**, this is an invaluable medium that can be leveraged to build and foster "relationships".

How can you effectively use Text messages...?

- Send announcements and last-minute reminders
- Share birthday wishes
- Provide Bible verses and short devotions
- Conduct contests, quizzes and polls
- Create a prayer chain and praise reports
- Introduce the weekend's upcoming Sunday school lesson or sermon
- Get quick feedback about an idea or question
- ...the possibilities are limitless!



Tip 6: Facebook

98% of churches use Facebook, while only 30% use Twitter. (Source: Buzzplant). However, the fact is that most churches that have used Facebook have rated it to be a 'waste of time' or had no significant value. However, the truth is that when done right, social media is an opportunity for us to bear witness of our testimony. When any organization sets forth to implement new portals of communication within its strategic operations, a deliberate plan is necessary for success. The challenge that comes to play is that social media is a unexplored medium for many and hiring a professional staff member to solely manage your social media may not be feasible for some budgets.

However, Facebook offers a great deal of value for churches wanting to connect in the social domain with an online community.

Says Danny Sullivan on Search Engine Land: "With Facebook Graph Search, the objects we search for aren't Web pages but instead virtual representations of real world objects: people, places and things. The connections are primarily the Facebook likes. Did such-and-such a person like a particular photo? a particular doctor-- a particular restaurant--{a particular church}". Those likes are the ties that bind the information in Facebook together. One reviewer calls it the "friend powered engine."

Embrace the Power of Social Media Share the Good News Every Day!

One way to take advantage of Facebook search is to get every person in your church to like your church's page, and then encourage them to suggest liking your church page to their friends. Think of it like this: When a person moves to your town, they may use Google or Bing to find a church. But after they have been in the community for a while, have made friends and have connections on Facebook, they may use Facebook search instead. The number of people who have liked your church's Facebook page can influence the search results.

Tip 7: Twitter & Your Pastoral Staff

Men and students populate the Twitterverse making it a great place to interact and inform. Tweeting about big time events (Superbowl, World Series, the Olympics, Men's events and other) allow much cross-communication with those who may not know Christ. Using hash tags for a sermon series (#GenerousLiving) allows members to find what others are saying. Non-members can see it, too.

Tip 8: A Pastoral Blog

Many, successful pastors now blog. Blogs are a way to add to or prepare members for a sermon, address an issue not in an upcoming sermon, share a devotional thought, and point members to other web content. Links to blogs can be fed through posts on Facebook, links from twitter and email blasts. Blogging can make pastors better preachers as it helps one refine thoughts and have a focus on clarity.

Tip 9: Don't Overlook Your Website!

Long gone are the days of using the YELLOW PAGES OR the Church Directory from the newspaper. Today people use Google, Bing, Yahoo or other search engines to find what they're looking for on the world, wide web. If your church does not have a website, or if it looks like it was assembled with wheat straw and baling wire, you may lose guests before they ever step foot on your campus.

Often when searchers find your Facebook page, the next thing they do is click the link to your website. If the site is out of date they will assume the same thing about your church. (They will assume the same thing if you do not

have a Facebook page or if that page is a digital wasteland.)

Your website must be visually appealing and easy to navigate. The landing page should be oriented toward non-members rather than members. Do not load the landing page with announcements, activity lists, a Twitter feed and the like. Create a member area for sign-ups, announcements and calendars. Make the landing page (home page) attractive, clean, and, above all, easy to navigate. Directions to your CAMPUS, service times and contact information should be in plain view.

Also, the site should be mobile friendly since people increasingly access the Internet on mobile devices even from home. Social media, like TV, radio and other technologies, are tools to be used for good or bad. The intent of the user says much about the effect of the tool. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs and other social media, may be used by churches and believers to impact a dying world with the gospel.

Churches should find ways to use social media to do what you most care about doing well. They just have to be who they are...It can be done beautifully; it can be done well. It's an opportunity to bear witness to a dying world in need of a spiritual revelation.

Interesting Facts about the Church and Social Media

Social media is the most effective method of outreach according to 46.1% of churches.

Key Performance Indicators

- Building a relationship with your advocates is paramount
- Social Media Team - set or responsibilities with accountability
- Understand the platforms and how you will set benchmarks, and obtain metrics for analysis
- Listening, posting, monitoring, curating, engaging, measurement are crucial for success
- Calendar/Plan that includes your optimized content layout

Embrace the Power of Social Media Share the Good News Every Day!

Other effective ways were knocking on doors (24.7%), newspaper (14.3%), radio (9.1%), and TV (5.8%). (Source: Buzzplant)

98% of churches use Facebook, while only 30% use Twitter. (Source: Buzzplant)

Larger churches are more likely than their smaller counterparts to use their websites interactively. 52% of congregations with 500 or more attendees use their website to “allow more processes at (their) church to be automated, compared with only 15% of churches with 1-49 attendees.” (Source: LifeWay Christian Resources)

The average click-through-rate is 115% higher for church emails that include at least one social media link. (Source: Anthony Coppedge | Focused on Church Health)



use

are

Approximately 51% of churches claim at least one of their staff regularly blogs or posts on social media.

74% of churches do not have a paid staff member that updates their church’s social media pages. (Source: Buzzplant)

More than 4 in 10 millennials have participated in online faith discussions and also blogged or commented on a blog about their faith. (Source: Facts & Trends)

62% of churches use social networking to connect with individuals outside of the congregation. (Source: Facts & Trends)

10. 52% of churches broadcast sermons online or have podcasts. 44% say that video media is occasionally used in sermons; 29% say it never is; 27% say it is used almost every week. (Source: Buzzplant)

About The Execution Group Social Media Services

Partner with TEG to Share the Gospel through Social Media

Sunday Morning Is Just Not Enough—



Embrace the Power of Social Media to Share the Good News—Every Day!

Social media done right is an opportunity to bear witness of our faith and testimony to the world in need of a spiritual a waking.

MINISTRY MARKETING™ SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES

We are a full service Marketing Communications and Digital Advertising Agency established 2009. Our goal is simple--help you to market and sell your products, services, cause or endeavors to an engaged and responsive audience. Beyond this, we are dedicated, honest, smart-working professionals interested in helping you succeed--this is our calling.

Our guiding mission is to support our customers with responsible leadership in marketing. We strive to deliver results that foster positive increase for the brands we

market. We venture to be a strategic partner to our clients providing impactful, creative brand centric services.

Why We Do What We Do?

Through the use of old and new school marketing, our vision is to connect brands with users to create synergistic communities populated with brand advocates. Our revelation is to help our clients make a positive impact within their brand's community; we do this to produce loyalty for our client's brand, value for their community and increase for society at large.

Request a digital analysis today by calling 908.431.5931.

Let's build something great together!