

## Choices and Your Announcements

[In an earlier post I referenced](#) Barry Schwartz's work *The Paradox of Choice*, which advocates that too many choices leads to regret because we are never confident we made the right choice. While I pointed out that this regret is really a result of our sinful hearts seeking satisfaction in things other than Christ, I do agree with Schwartz's hypothesis that too many choices leads to "decision paralysis."

In a talk at the well-known TED conference, Schwartz gave an illustration of Vanguard financial services, which conducts voluntary retirement programs at companies for more than 1 million employees. These voluntary retirement programs include matching funds from employers, meaning they are deeply beneficial and advantageous to the employee. According to Schwartz, participation in the retirement program drops 2 percent for every 10 options presented to employees. If 50 fund options are presented, participation drops 10 percent.

The employees are overwhelmed by the number of options, walk away from free matching money, and go home thinking they will sign up another day. The plethora of choices leads to "decision paralysis."

After consulting with a lot of churches, I am convinced the same thing happens each week for them. The number of things that are presented as "next steps" or "opportunities for involvement" are too many and lead to paralysis. It is often hard to keep up with the barrage of announcements unloaded in a 3-4 minute time frame. Calling the person giving the monologue an MC or tour guide (yes, I have seen that happen) or putting together a great video will not solve the problem of too many announcements.

**A better way is to say less. We really do say more by saying less.**

What is the magic number of announcements? I am not sure. I have seen some churches effectively bundle three announcements to feel like one because everything was deeply woven together and connected to an overarching direction. At the same time, I have seen others make one announcement feel like ten because the details were so confusing.

The point is that too many choices results in paralysis. Consider helping your people benefit from the great ministry your church is offering by pushing less options.

Read more by Eric [here](#).

