

A Simple Strategy for Church Communication: Engage

[In a previous post](#), I outlined three essentials of a church communications plan and promised to develop the three points further. Today, we begin with the **keys to engaging your audience**. Remember, your audience includes both church members and potential guests alike. So it's imperative that you craft messages for both and to each segment.

Engagement is most successful when you start with the goals of your communication in mind and work backwards: consider the desired result, decide the best platform to reach your goal, and word your message accordingly. This can be seen more fully in these six strategic steps:

1. **Keep the audience in mind.** One main reason for communications failure is not considering the audience for the message. When you don't think from the audience's perspective, you tend to miss details or context clues that are needed in communications. A good example of this is using acronyms. Members may know what you mean, but church acronyms are often lost on guests. Simplify your messaging to reach the widest audience possible as clearly as possible.
2. **Decide on the best channel for communications.** Not thinking about the audience often leads to using the wrong channel of communication. Not every message has the same audience, and not every message requires the same channel. Some announcements are better made in print, others are better online, and still others need to be communicated verbally.
3. **Find the best timing.** A major church event needs weeks of lead-time when you're communicating to your members and guests. A Wednesday night supper menu doesn't. But for weekly events, don't wait until the last minute or the day before to promote them. Promote them early and often. Finally, when using social media, consider posting at times when you know people will be online and able to respond or share your posts.
4. **Think about the wording.** Every word matters. How you label something or the words you use to communicate will have an effect on how people respond or digest the information. A pastor I know once referred to "tithes and offerings" as "church revenue" in a blog post. He received several angry emails and letters as a result. It was an honest mistake, but it goes to show how using the wrong wording can cause the message to be missed.
5. **Use appropriate imagery.** Images should compliment the message, not distract from it. There are several free or low cost image sites online for churches to use. If you use imagery wisely, you'll better communicate with your audience. Please, no clip art. Please.
6. **Proof relentlessly.** Some mistakes will slip through. It happens. But you should do everything possible to proof everything that is sent out from your church. Find someone other than the creator to look over something before it's sent. Familiarity with a document or message will cause you to miss errors. A fresh set of eyes is always best to catch spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors.

Once you've moved through this progression, you should have a more fully developed and engaging message to communicate.

How do you engage your audience with your church's communications? Is there something that is particularly effective for you in your context?

[Connect with an Auxano Navigator to learn more about engaging your church through communication.](#)

> [Read more from Jonathan.](#)