

Taking Your Vision Public, Step 5: Leveraging Every Medium

I've been in a series called [Taking Vision Public: Six Steps to Vision-Soaked Communication](#). We've been looking at the steps involved in sharing your unique vision in compelling ways, inviting people to join in and be a part of what God has called you to do and be as a church. Here's what we've covered already:

- Step 1 – [Articulating Your Vision](#)
- Step 2 – [Developing Your Tagline](#)
- Step 3 – [Crafting Your Key Messages](#)
- Step 4 – [Communicating the Big Why](#)

Now, it's time to break out the hose, leveraging every communication medium as an outlet for your vision. **This is a crucial step as we move from strategy to implementation, from planning to practice.** This is also the step where far too many ministries drastically limit their effectiveness because of their unwillingness to make changes to their daily, weekly, and monthly rhythms.

Communication in any organization is built on certain rhythms and rituals, and churches are no different. A church's normal weekly rhythm (a weekly worship service) drives many of its communication rituals. **Each of these rituals need to be examined, evaluated, and reshaped in light of the work you've done in prior steps.** This is where the hard work is really done, where the rubber meets the road, where difficult decisions need to be made.

DON'T MAKE THE BIG MISTAKE

The biggest mistake I see churches make at this point in the process is that they don't leverage every medium to its fullest for the sake of communicating the vision. Here's what I mean. You can redesign your weekly bulletin and overhaul your announcements to be built on vision, but if those things are disconnected from all the other things you do every Sunday, the effect will be minimal. Remember, **your entire worship service is a communication event.** Every word that is said, every song that is sung, every message that is preached is telling people what you think is important. If the only "vision language" that people hear is during the announcements or in the weekly bulletin, it will fall flat. That's why I like the image of "vision-soaked communication."

Your vision—articulated in the language you developed in steps 1-4—needs to permeate your weekly worship services. Why do we sing? Why do we pray? Why do we spend so much time reading the Bible and trying to understand what it means for us today? Why is community

important? The answers to these questions must be articulated **all the time** and in every medium, using the vision-soaked language you've developed. **Use the language until you're tired of it.** That's when people will start to understand it.

There are three stages to vision becoming engrained in the hearts of people: awareness, understanding, and appreciation. First, people will slowly become aware of the vision you're presenting and the consistent language you're using to present it. Next, people will begin to understand what you mean and why it's important. The final stage is appreciation, when people value the vision and can tell others why it's important. These stages only come as you break out the hose in every area, not even just your entire weekend services.

LEVERAGE EVERY MEDIUM

Here's a list we've developed over the years of many of the possible mediums you can use to communicate your vision. It's not comprehensive, but it should certainly give you a good start. Each of these mediums should have vision running through it all the time.

- weekly bulletin
- verbal announcements
- message or message series
- videos (used during services, on website, etc.)
- **information center** (physical place people go with questions)
- pre-service announcement slides
- photos
- website
- Facebook (and other social media)
- e-newsletter (monthly or quarterly)
- print newsletter (monthly or quarterly)
- **pastor's blog (or other staff members' blog)**
- mailings (letters, postcards, etc.)
- billboards
- newspaper ads
- sign(s) outside church building and/or offices
- posters (inside the church and in the community)
- invitation cards (tools for people to invite friends)
- welcome brochure
- other print pieces highlighting programs and events
- **environmental design** (photos, banners, etc. within your meeting space)

SPECIAL NOTE

Churches are historically bad at leveraging visual media like photos and videos. With the tools available today, decent videos are within the reach of every church in America. **By definition, photos and videos connect with people on an emotional level long before words alone will.** (Check out the book [Flickering Pixels](#) for a more detailed exploration of this topic.) Who are the people in your congregation that love to take pictures? Ask them to take high-quality photos

at least once a quarter in all of your different environments (not just the main worship services!). Use as many of these photos as possible across every medium, showing people what the vision looks like. (Make sure to get permission from people to use their photos. Check with your lawyer on specific guidelines for this.)

When you take your vision public, you need to break out the hose, leveraging every medium to share your vision-soaked communication. There's one more step to taking vision public, and it may be the most underestimated step of all. We'll cover it next time.