The Small Gap Creating a Big Problem in Your Communication

When I say it out loud, it just doesn't feel right. But, I do turn 50 next month, so the math checks out. "I've been in the professional communication arena for thirty years." There. I've said it. And, it's so weird. It doesn't feel like that long. It feels like I'm at the starting line. I think that's because communications is basically a lifelong work study program; it just never gets old.

But, after three decades at this, I can tell you there's one major communication gap derailing our effectiveness as leaders and handicapping the growth and impact of good organizations and causes. It's a big one; and it's especially prominent in the church. And, I wonder why nobody's talking about it.

Churches are trying to "do communications" by hiring talented and skilled project managers, creatives, marketers, videographers, graphic designers, writers, etc., giving them big titles and throwing them into a cyclone of activity with no strategic or executive clarity. They send them to conferences to get better at their craft and learn the newest "how to" of the current trends to make more excellent work. And, people still aren't happy. So they hire. And, fire. And, blame. And, micromanage.

And, while these skilled artists continue to generate a flurry of creative digital, design and video content on demand - it's not helping align the church or equip the people they're serving. *More* communications is not what's missing.

> **The critical gap I see derail communications isn't a technical problem. It's a gap between leadership and staff. It's what happens between aspirational vision and operational behavior. What's missing is the basic blueprint that organizes the direction of our communications.**

If you follow any road of pain and frustration in an organization, "it" will inevitably lead to communications. Even if the problem didn't start there, the communications activity is where people see and feel it.

Communications and creative work is only as good as the strategy that drives it. This is where churches and not-for-profits are falling behind today. The cart is driving the horse. Someplace, in the frenzy of communicating more and creating more inspiring creative work, we've missed the whole point.

Communications isn't a standalone function you can put on autopilot. It's not something to be delegated to the boss, the extrovert or creative. It's a shared function every leader and every staff person needs to own and apply in their zone. But, without strategic communication direction and clarity from an executive and organizational level, individual projects proliferate and chaos grows quickly.

Communications isn't a separate function in your church body, it's the entire circulatory system. What are you doing to pump blood to all the parts?

A good, working circulatory systems starts with a good source. So, let's start there - how do you define communications? (pick one)

1. transactional department where a lot of cool project activity happens.
2. exclusive hub where creatives hone their craft and make inspirational magic.
3. critical growth engine for our church and our people. (hint: this is the right answer)

Communications is a critical growth engine that needs fuel

You have several departments that deal with "customers" and communications must be integrated into all of them - not just in look, but behavior. Not just in creative and marketing, but everywhere. Communications touches everything - kids and students, missions, weekend experience, outreach, groups, leadership development, volunteer strategy, discipleship - yet, it's often treated as an add-on function.

A solid communications strategy and some simple operator tools can unlock the communication areas across your organization that keep getting jammed up. If you're looking for help getting the communication engine in your organization running again, I've got good news.

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