

TOPTIPS

COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

TT02

Getting across the gospel message and important information through communications both in your church and out in the community is not easy. Here is BUGB Head of Communications Amanda Allchorn's top tips on local church communications planning.

1

Your Church Vision/focus & purpose

Align a communication plan with heart of church focus & mission calling. Try and get 'communications' on the church and Deacons Agenda. Then review where you are now by getting key people together over a coffee eg Newsletter Editor, PPT/audio visual coordinator, web-master, youth leader (for younger input) etc. Discuss strengths and weaknesses and note opportunities!

2

Your 'Church Style'

If you have identified you are an 'outward facing/heart of the community church' your communications/images should reflect this. If you say you are 'dynamic', this also should affect your style! Also make the plan intentional...you really want to move forward!

3

Audience

Internal – Think about who you are communicating with. Review your communications and consider who they are intended for? Eg - Newsletter for everyone, poster for young people's event, coffee morning for elderly. Design materials accordingly, but keep a logo/house style that cuts across all so you know they are from the same church!

External – Again who are you communicating with? Is your community rural, urban, commuter area, industrial, lots of young families, mainly elderly? Adapt your style to suit.

4

Communication Channels

This is nothing to do with water! What will you use to communicate with? Think carefully what the best channel is to communicate your message. Will it be printed eg Magazine, Newsletter, posters, notice boards, leaflets. Will it be audio visual eg DVD, PPT, Or perhaps by web, email, text. Do you use the media locally eg Newspapers, local radio, TV? A plug for an event/Alpha on local radio followed up with info on your church website could be as successful as a leaflet drop.

Remember too, that face to face contact at events, services and meetings is another channel – and often most successful!

5

People & Budget

Meet with other people in the church who are responsible for aspects of communication regularly to chat over where you are/what might be missing eg developing a website. Make sure the Minister, Church Sec and Deacons are in the loop and involved. It is also a great idea to have a cuppa with your Church Treasurer...you might need to get something into the Church Budget to pay for new resources!

6

Timeline & Evaluation

In your plan try and put dates to when you want to have something complete. Eg. If you want to develop a website, plan when you want it up and running/how will this link to adding web address to notepaper/notices? Then check at the end of the period things are happening!

In busy churches it is often hard to then stop and consider if something has been successful. But by looking at the number of visits your new website has attracted will indicate if people are using it, and perhaps if you need to promote it more.

7

And finally resources/books to check out...

'How to be heard in a noisy world' Phil Creighton (ex-Baptist Times)

www.authenticmedia.co.uk

'100 ways to get your church noticed' Neil Pugmire

www.kingsway.co.uk