

Starter Questions For Church Communication Teams*

*(Groups, Committees, Task Forces, etc.)

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Here are 10 sets of starter questions to assist the Church Communication Team with its organization and focus. I recommend the following people or groups take place in this discussion: (a) Pastoral staff; (b) Outreach/Evangelism/Visitation ministry; (c) Building and Grounds ministry; (d) Usher and Greeter ministry; (e) Newsletter editor and Website manager; (f) Key program planning staff.

I don't recommend tackling all 10 sets of questions at one time. My recommendation is to set aside a retreat for this project, or meet weekly for three weeks and take 3-4 questions per week. Present each question and ask individuals to write their response. Collect the responses so that there is a written record of responses (this can be anonymous). Then discuss the questions. I recommend having a recorder, who can record thoughts and ideas from the discussion.

Scott Vaughan Communications, LLC is available to facilitate a discussion of these questions on the journey to developing a communication strategy for local congregations. To discuss this option, please call me at (803) 808-7555 or (803) 315-0234.

1. What are the unique, specific ministry strengths of our church? What ministries or ministry events do we offer the community that no other church offers? Or, what about our ministries is unique to what other churches offer? What ministries are celebrated in a way that members are comfortable inviting their friends? What does the community recognize as our ministry strengths?
2. What does our membership look like? What percentages are ages 18-25, 26-40, 41-60, 61-80, and 80 and above? Does our membership generally have a high school education, or a college education? Are we white collar, blue collar, or agricultural? Are we rural, small town, suburban, or urban? What's the ethnic makeup of our congregation? How does the demographic look of our congregation affect congregational thinking?
3. Based on the demographic look of our membership (No. 2), how do these statistics compare to the top 12 leaders of our church? (Not leadership positions, but true leaders/individuals). Does our key leadership reflect the demographics of our current general membership or the future membership? Which reflection is more important for our church? Is that an area of concern? How important is cultural connectivity between leaders, members and community?

4. Where does our membership live? What's the average drive radius and drive mileage to the church property? Don't guess - get this information. Can we call this area our 'ministry field'?
5. Based on the 'ministry field' (No. 4), what does that community demographic look like compared to the membership data found in Question No. 2?
6. Can we see demographic (ethnicity, age, gender, education/economics) similarities between our membership and our community? Or, has the church demographic shifted away from the community demographic? Depending on the shift, can we see its affect on church growth?
7. If the demographic between church and community is similar, how can we effectively communicate our ministry strengths to our community? If the demographic between church and community is disconnected, how do we discover what the community needs for us to offer? Are we prepared to reconnect with our community? What must we *sacrifice* in order to reconnect with our community?
8. How effective are the following communication streams: Website, newsletter, worship bulletin or guide, e-mail, bulletin boards, welcome centers, and community advertising? Which are priorities for communication with membership; and, which are priorities for communicating with the community? How do we strengthen our communication streams? Do we need to change the personnel responsible for our communication streams? Do we need to invest in new technology?
9. How effective is our greeter ministry? How well do we meet and greet all those who come to our church property - members and guests? Does our usher ministry embrace the role of church greeters? How can we strengthen this ministry? Are we organized for member and guest comfort? How do we distinguish between customer service and customer satisfaction?
10. Does our general membership understand the organization of our church? Does our general membership feel like it is in the loop of church news and organization? What's the percentage of net membership/attendance growth per year over the past five years? How does the net percentage growth of our congregation compare to the net percentage growth of our local school district?

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