

Title: Developing an Effective Church Web Strategy

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Summary: Having a web strategy for your church is really a part of having for you church - your website is just one aspect of all your communication strategy will be broken into several components - a website, possibly a Facebook account, maybe other online channels like YouTube and MySpace.

There are many pieces to your web strategy, but just having all the pieces together - yet!

Just like shaking the box won't assemble the jigsaw puzzle for you, you must know how it will all fit together and then take steps to make it all happen. Today and the steps in the context of an overall strategy.

Are you just getting involved with your church's website? Have you been there quite a while? In [ask these questions](#)

How current is the content? Are there any 'upcoming' events that are not on the site?
Is the phone number present and correct?
Are there pictures of people you recognize the faces from your church?
Is your church website important enough to be in your budget?
How many words do you not understand, even as an 'insider'?
Are there links to your other web channels (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter) from your website to other channels?
Is there a purpose for each page? Do you know what to do next?
How are you measuring the effectiveness of your church's web presence?

These are a just a few key questions your church should answers in their strategy.

Strategies: Variety, Needs, Access

It's not a strategy if you are just republishing your print publication on Facebook or Twitter without regard to your posts on Facebook or the content on your website. Having an online strategy presumes you have an overall strategy will position your organization based on variety, needs, access factors:

Variety: variety-based strategy positions itself on offering something no other product or program is one-of-a-kind and can't be found anywhere else.

Needs In needs-based strategy, your focus is on a particular group of people

Access An access-based strategy focuses on delivery - offering a product or service that is unique to a group of people that is already being serviced, but doing so in a new way

Define your objectives: what needs are you going to meet (variety), who are you going to meet (needs) and how are you going to deliver (access)?

Once you have determined your position, the following questions are asked

What message are we trying to communicate?

Who do we want to hear the message?

Who is actually hearing the message?

What message are they receiving?

Ask these questions initially, then continually ask those questions, refining your intentions converge with your results. Even then, you need to continue to ask those questions to be sure you stay on track. You should be able to report on the effectiveness of your communications every quarter. They will help you clarify your purpose so you can stay on track.

One war, but many battles

People use the web for many things -

Library

Marketplace

Post Office

Town square

Soap box

Entertainment Center

There are many ways to access the web -

Desktop computers

Portable computers

Mobile devices (phones, tablets, others - like iPods)

And, many avenues to travel on the web -

Web sites and pages

Social networks (Facebook, MySpace)

Video sharing (YouTube, Vimeo, Blip.tv, GodVine)
Microblogging (Twitter)

All the above can be overwhelming if you are going to establish a strategy. You won't - you will carry out your strategy through all these battle front positions we outlined at the beginning. The web is a means to deliver an evangelistic message. The web will also be a part of who you are trying to reach, but those boundaries will change quickly. It is vitally important you develop an overall communication strategy for the web and expect it to be your saving grace.

Variety, access, needs. What is the focus of your church communication strategy? What are the goals and objectives of bringing your ministry online?

If you'd like to read some other thoughts on church web strategy, here are some links I was preparing this article:

[What is Your Church Strategy?](#)
[The New Traditional Church: Web Strategy](#)
[Strategies for Effective Church Sites](#)
[Church Marketing Sucks Series: Church Websites 101](#)

How does your church approach the web? Does it have a web strategy? Does it have a communication strategy?