

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



5 Ways

***CRAPPY INTERNAL CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS
CAN SLOW DOWN YOUR CHURCH'S GROWTH***

RICH BIRCH



“The art of communication is the language of leadership.” - James Humes

How can I make this clear? **If your church is crappy at communicating, you won't grow!** In fact, communication is at the core of how your church will (or will not) grow.

The art and science of ensuring that the right message gets to the right people at the right time is at the core of seeing your church impact more people. You can't just “wing” this aspect of your leadership; in fact, communication is your leadership. It's core to what you “do” in the church.

Here are 5 ways that poor communication might be holding back your church ...

Fuzzy Focus Leads to Vision Drift

“You or I could deliver a mind-blowing, God-honoring, pulse-quickenning vision talk on Sunday that leaves everyone revved up to go change the world, but by Tuesday, many people have forgotten they were even in church the previous weekend. Unbelievable, huh? Vision leaks.” - Bill Hybels, Founding Pastor, Willow Creek Community Church

Over time if your church doesn't consistently keep its vision in front of people, the reason for your existence will become fuzzy. If your people aren't clear why your church exists they

will just fill in the “vision blanks” and assume the church is about them. **The church is the only organization in the world whose total existence is for the people outside of it!** If you don't remind the people time and again that the reason your church exists is to reach out to other people with the timeless message of Jesus, the church will drift into ineffectiveness.

4 Signs Vision is Leaking at Your Church

Below are some sure signs that vision is leaking at your church. Do you see one of these happening at your church? If yes, then you would need to clarify the church's vision to the people. If you're experiencing all four of these, it's time to articulate the vision in a massive and repeated way at your church!

- **Petty Infighting** // Are people worried about the color of the carpet at your church? (Or some other really petty stuff?) We tend to make mountains out of molehills when it's not clear what we're called to as a church.
- **Everyone Agrees With You** // I once had a mentor who told me that if 10% of the church isn't upset with something you're doing, you're probably not taking new ground. I think that sentiment is accurate!
- **It Seems Boring** // We are engaged in a massive human drama, the outcome

of which is literally global in scale. If you're not picking up on some of that excitement, then vision is leaking.

- **Fiefdoms & Sideways Energy** // Are there leaders in your community that seem to divert people to a vision that is not quite aligned? Are there aspects of your ministry that are pulling away from the overall direction of the church?



Fewer Volunteers = Fewer Inviters

The more people that volunteer at your church, the larger your church will grow. A growth in volunteer engagement seems to precede attendance growth. This makes sense because the level of vision casting that is required to move someone from not volunteering to being a fully engaged member of the team means that those people are brought in. A natural outflow of being totally sold out on what's happening at a church is to tell your friends about it. Prevailing churches are attempting to grow the percentage of people serving in part to see more people reaching out to their friends and family about being a part of the church.

The 1/3 Rule of Church Health

How many people attend your church? How many individual people do you have serving in the teams at your church? If you aren't seeing 33% of your people volunteering at your church, then you're missing out on something and are probably not growing. Prevailing churches look for ways to grow this percentage because they know that the more people they get to serve on teams, the more those people will "remark" about their church, and, in turn, the more "remarkable" the church will become. Use this rule of thumb to gauge how your church is doing. If your church has less than 1/3 of your people serving then you need to grow

your service teams! If you are privileged to have more than that number, see how much past the 1/3 mark in volunteers that you can grow as a precursor to growth.

Unclear Communications Means Lower Financial Resources

The late (and great) [Howard Hendricks](#) once asked his seminary class "How much ministry does \$100 buy?" He paused, and his class considered the question. He went on to answer "About \$100 worth!" As church leaders, we need to be thinking about the funding of the mission that God has called us to lead. If you have unclear communication around the funding of the mission of your church, it is bound to suffer financially. When churches begin to struggle financially they take fewer risks and in turn don't impact as many people. If your church isn't fully funded, it probably means that you are lacking some basic communication around generosity and giving.

6 Generosity Systems Your Church Needs to be Fully Funded

These 6 "systems" are the starting point of what your church needs to see so that your mission is fully funded. Start with these and you'll see your financial picture turning around.

- **Thanking & Acknowledging** // Beyond just the annual tax receipt statement you need to generate to keep your charitable status, in what ways are you communicating with your donors to thank them for giving to the mission of your church?
- **For Not From** // Your church needs a regular and systematic way to help people win with their finances. You're not trying to get something "from" your people but instead, you want something "for" them. Check out Joe Sangl's [Financial Learning Experience](#) and implement it in your church.
- **Offering Talks** // The two minutes before your offering are vitally important to connect the vision of the church to people's giving and to what God is doing in your church. [Leverage this vitally important time](#) every time you receive the offering.
- **Digital Giving** // Moving people to give online and, in particular, to automated

regular giving builds a financial foundation that helps to drive the church in the future.

- **Year End Strategy** // A disproportionate amount of charitable giving is done during the last 45 days of the year. ([In fact, 10% of all the giving is done in the last 48 hours!](#)) Your church needs a clear plan for communicating during this important time of the year!
- **Core Donor Connections** // There are people in your church who have the gift of giving. As with any other gift, you need to help people grow in using this gift too. Building a strategy around cultivating these relationships will fuel the ministry of the church.

Botched “New Here” Guest Process Misses Opportunities

Growing churches are “guest obsessed”. They go out of their way to ensure that when guests arrive they are doing everything they can to see those guests get plugged in. They spend a lot of time, effort, and energy crafting their “new here” process to move anonymous guests closer to the community. Most churches don’t have the problem of “not enough guests”; the problem they face is in getting those guests to stick and stay. When this process is muddy and unclear it hinders your growth in a few ways:

- If guests are unclear on what their “next steps” are they are less likely to return.
- People who are newer to your church are among the most avid “inviters”, and so, if you are leaving guests unconnected you are missing out on them inviting friends.

5 Resources to Help You Connect with Your Guests

- [23-page digital magazine “Welcome Home”](#)
- [4 Sure Signs Your Church Needs More First-Time Guests](#)
- [First Time Guest Gifts: 26 Lessons from 33 Churches](#)

- [5 Simple Changes to Make Your Church More Unchurched Friendly](#)
- [4 Stages of Engagement with First-Time Guests at Your Church](#)

No Clear Calls to Action Means Lack of Traction

Growing churches don’t shy away from making “calls to action” of their people. They ensure that people know the action that the leadership is hoping the people will take. What they expect the people to do next in order to grow in their relationship with God is not fuzzy or unclear. Growing churches don’t bombard their people with a lot of tasks, instead, they narrow down the focus to a small number of items designed to maximize the people’s engagement with the church. They use crisp and clear language to ensure people are crystal clear about what the church is looking for.



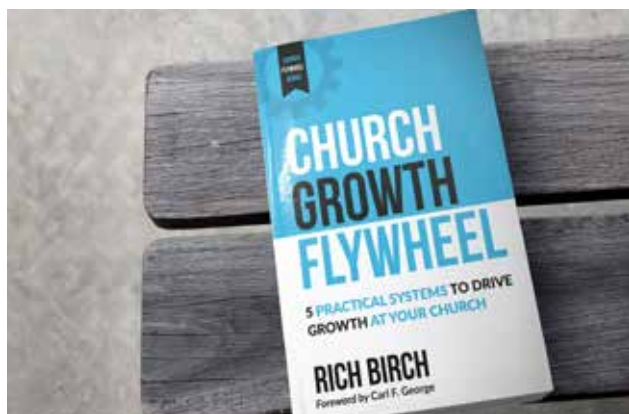
3 Principles of Clear Calls to Action for Church Communications

- **Time Sensitive** // [Use scarcity to communicate](#) that people need to respond quickly.
- **Fewer Words** // Use just as many words that are required to ask for the action; no more.
- **Remove Friction** // Ask yourself, how can we make this even easier for people to respond? (Keep asking the question again ... and again ... and again.)

Help for Using Your Church’s Internal Communication to Grow

Are you ready to see your church impact

more people than it has ever done before? Are you tired of church leadership books that are long on theory but short on practical help? Have you wanted to reach more people in your community but weren't sure where to start? Are you worried that your church isn't reaching its full potential? "[Church Growth Flywheel: 5 Practical Systems To Drive Growth at Your Church](#)" is full of practical insights to help your church reach more people, starting today!



This book wouldn't be complete without a discussion of how the church "talks to itself", so, I included a discussion on the connection between internal communication and the church's growth. I attempted to boil down what I learned from leading in one of the fastest growing churches in the country and also from the over 200 interviews I've conducted with prevailing church leaders from across the country. In this section, we:

- Consider the 3 types of people we're trying to cultivate within our church to help us reach more people.
- Outline the 5 steps your church needs to take for using communication to help "close the backdoor" and see your guests stick and stay.
- Talk through how to leverage the 5 minutes you have every week during your church announcement time to help in the growth of the church.
- Provide a list of quick action steps you can put into play right away to help with the church communications.

The book launches in February 13, 2018. However, you can read Chapter 1 now by

visiting [ChurchGrowthFlywheel.com](#) and joining the interest list. You'll get front-of-the-line access about the launch and a few other freebies along the way.

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