

stuff you wish they taught in seminary

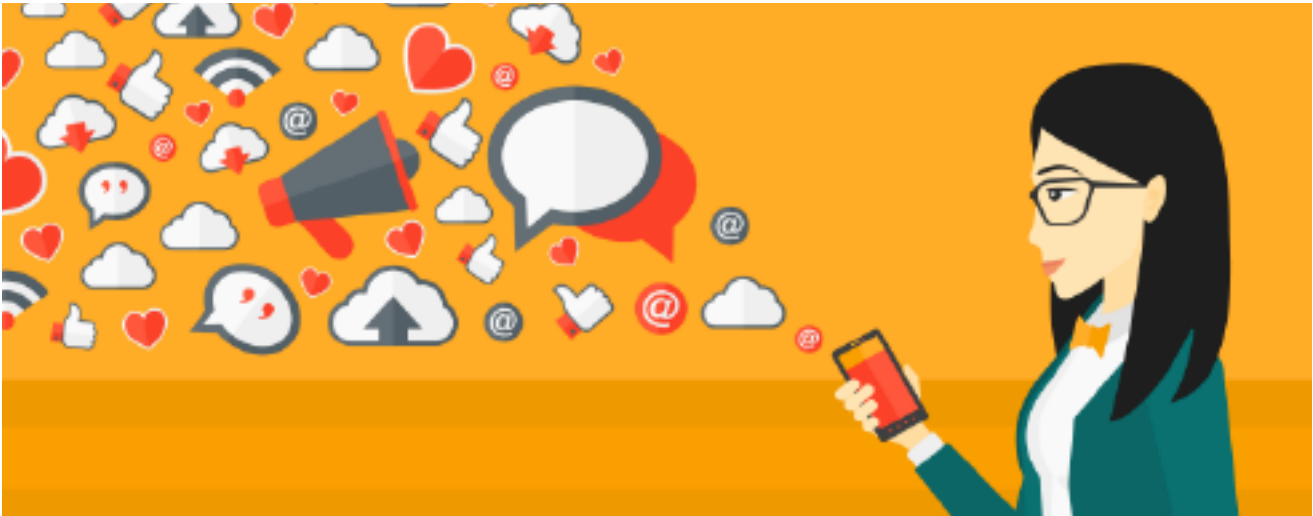


6 Myths

ABOUT CHURCH MARKETING THAT HOLD BACK YOUR CHURCH

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6 MYTHS ABOUT CHURCH MARKETING THAT HOLD BACK YOUR CHURCH



At some point, most church leaders think about how they are going to use marketing to reach their community. They're ready to make an impact in their city or town and wonder if there is a way to leverage better communications to reach the people close to them. These leaders may be influenced by **a number of misconceptions about church marketing that pervade the thinking of pastors and church leaders today.**

Do any of the following myths about church marketing impact your church? Like always, we would love to hear from you about what you're learning as a church leader!

- **If You Preach It ... They Will Come** // The belief that if you simply offer compelling weekend service experiences, people will tell their friends and those friends will show up is an easy trap to fall into. Although at its core every church needs to offer quality experiences, we also need to communicate the features and benefits of our churches to the communities we serve. In fact, many leaders need to think as much about how they market and communicate what is happening at their church as they think about what they're actually doing. In the same way that artisans wish they just could make their art and not have to find people to purchase it, we can fall into the false notion of believing that our quality experiences are enough on their own.

- **Good Marketing Grows Churches** // On the opposite end of the spectrum, there is a belief that only marketing tactics can grow a church. Good communication accentuates what is already happening at your church. The reason churches grow is because of a series of complex factors working together to build positive momentum. Marketing is one factor but it's not the only thing that drives church growth. Good marketing will attract crowds but you need to have systems and a community that will receive those people and care for them well. Doing a good job of marketing is the beginning of church growth but it's not the only contributor to it.

• **The Silver Bullet Theory** // We are all susceptible to the belief that the latest marketing tactic or shiny object will cause our churches to grow. We may see another church do a great job with Facebook ads, so we put all our time, effort and energy into this one approach... only to find that it doesn't bring about the change that we want. We might hear about a specific church and how they saw results from a certain tactic – and believe if we just apply that one tactic, our church will grow too. But there isn't just one marketing tactic or channel that will cause your church to grow. We need to employ a wide variety of methods to get our message out to the broader community. The issue is getting the mix of communication approaches correct so that we reach the intended people.

• **It's Sleazy** // Let's be honest for a moment: some of us believe that marketing is "beneath" what we are called to do as church leaders and pastors. We think that attracting people to our services, events and programs is akin to the sleazy used car salesman on the local cable channel with the gold chains around his neck. This just isn't true. Why did the New Testament writers use the broadest available language of the day rather than their regional dialect? They did this so that the maximum number of people in their culture would be impacted with the message of Jesus. When Paul stood on Mars Hill and challenged the thinkers of his day about the unknown God, he was attempting to attract their thinking and attention to the message of Jesus. People are busy and it's our

job to break through the noise and get them thinking about what it is that our churches have to say to them.

• **Offline Communications Are Dead** // Direct mail, Yellow Pages, billboards, newspaper advertising ... all of these represent waning forms of communication. It's easy to question their effectiveness but don't be fooled. Many of these channels are still useful ways to get in front of people. They may not be as effective as digital forms of communication, but because of their waning impact, you can sometimes leverage these channels in an extremely cost-effective manner. Take direct mail as an example. People only receive bills and junk mail at home. When your church sends mail to the community, it serves as a change from what usually arrives. In a fully digital era, the novelty of direct mail has increased while the cost of sending it has decreased.

• **We Don't Do Marketing** // There's a group of church leaders that mistakenly believe that their churches aren't involved in marketing. The reality is that all churches market to their communities... some just do it well while others do it poorly. If your church has a sign in front of it, or even the name that you call yourself, then you are marketing to the people around you. At its core marketing is how you position what you do to the community around you so that they will engage with your church. Stop thinking that you don't market and start engaging in what it would look like to do it well in your community.

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