



*Ministry*  
Marketing Companion

# Ministry Marketing Companion



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## General Marketing for Ministry

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### **Define what you are doing and deliver on your promise.**

Before you can advertise or publicize, you must know who you are and what you provide. Define what that is, and then make sure you can deliver on it. Never promise anything you cannot deliver - you may get people in the door, but they will not return if you don't perform the way you say you do.

**Involve the congregation.** The relationship your congregants have with newcomers is key to whatever you provide. Help your congregants to care for the “strangers in our midst,” by incorporating a newcomer ministry (see Andrew Weeks' *Welcome! Tools & Techniques*...listed on the resource page. Also, ask us for the *Marketing Research Bulletin, Newcomer Ministry*).

**Target your audience with the right message.** Remember that appealing to the masses is no longer a good option. People in our society are so bombarded with information that we need to give them something that specifically relates to them in order to find a receptive audience. Start with the people in your congregation now, especially those who are new in the last year. What needs do they have, and how can you provide something to fulfill that need? Focus on this as the central message for your advertising. If you don't know, survey your congregation (see George Barna's *A Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing* for samples and information, or call us for assistance).

**Encourage congregants to invite their friends.** Advertising can only supplement personal invitations, which is the most powerful way to bring in new congregants. In churches that use advertising along with personal invitations, advertising effectiveness increases by 40 to 60%. This is because advertising improves the image of the church among current congregants, and increases their motivation for inviting.

## General Marketing for Ministry *cont.*



**Plan and time your media.** Advertising is usually more effective if you can use more than one medium, and use each more than once. A typical campaign should last about 2 weeks, with as many ads as is possible given the budget. Also, the most effective time of year for church advertising is Christmas, and the second most effective time is Easter. Early fall, far behind the other two times, is the next best.

**Monitor your success.** Often advertising is a trial and error process. But you can learn something from the efforts you do make. Ask people in the congregation to monitor your media for the ads, so that you make sure you get what you bought. Ask congregants if it helped them to invite. Ask visitors if any ad influenced their decision to attend, and which one - this could be included on any visitor sign up card.

**The most effective media campaigns.** The key is redundancy. We also need at least three campaigns to perfect our methods.

Adapted from *Blueprints for Congregational Reachout*, by Herb Miller

## Planning Your Advertising

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**The first thing to know: Nothing kills a bad product faster than good advertising.**

- Make sure your product delivers what you promise.

**The second thing to know: Your audience.**

- Who is your audience? Current members or potential new members - young couples with children, young singles, college students, retirees, etc.
- Where are they located? Within your zip code? County? Suburb?
- Can you define the area you want to cover?
- What major benefit do you offer them? How is it unique from others offering similar benefits?

**The third thing to know: The methods.**

What is your message? Brainstorm several ideas for communicating your main benefit and your uniqueness, and choose from them.

What media will you use? Choose according to:

- **Your Audience**, for example, radio and television are most effective for reaching teenagers. Also some media can be more closely targeted than others, if you have a well-defined audience.
- **Your Product or Service**, for example, if you are trying to demonstrate something requiring action, television would be the best. If you have information about a class schedule, this might be best in print.
- **Your Message**, for example, announcing an emergency blood drive for tomorrow requires newspaper or radio.
- **Your Cost**, for example, television can be very expensive, while newspapers are relatively inexpensive. Consider how well you will cover your audience, using information supplied by the media. A neighborhood newspaper might be low in cost, but if it doesn't reach the audience you have in mind, it may not be the better buy. Using a combination of media is also very effective

## Ads That Work

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(Or brochures, or fliers, or handbills...)

### Visual

- A single, powerful image that reinforces the message is best
- One piece of artwork (includes photos and illustrations)
- Limit yourself to three typefaces, counting bold and italic faces, to minimize the cluttered look
- Look for focus points, and make the most important message the place where your eye rests - see how your eye is drawn through the page
- Remember that people won't work hard to figure out what the message is, or what the visual element is
- Must have a clear focal point, otherwise the eye tires of wandering aimlessly around the page
- Plenty of white space - don't worry about filling every bit of the page

### The Human Element

- The illustration (photo or art) should have meaning for the reader, inviting further reading

### Emphasize Benefits

- What will your offering do for the reader?
- Focus on the reader, not on what you have to offer (i.e., a sense of peace in the midst of a busy world, vs. a meditation class)
- Choose one main idea
- Focusing on one main benefit will require you to know your audience and what is most likely to appeal to them
- Do **not** attempt to tell readers everything about your church! You are only trying to generate interest, not sell your church, which comes later through personal contact

## Ads That Work *cont.*

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### Reality Check

- Test your materials with someone who knows nothing about what you are advertising
- Ask if they understand what the piece is saying
- Ask if they know what the visual represents
- Get any other reaction they have to it
- Always run spell check on your computer, and always proofread!
- Nothing can spoil credibility faster than a minor mistake

### Possible Themes for Brochures (choose one)

- The programs your ministry offers (and the associated benefits)
- Spiritual and psychological benefits
- Teachings of the ministry
- The ministry to the needy in the community or around the world

### Other Considerations

- Two colors draws more readership (where you use black and a color, or two other colors), and it doesn't cost a great amount more than one color (where you use only black print, or any other color alone)
- If you use one color, consider something other than black: green, blue, and purple are all good possibilities - something dark enough that is readable
- The human eye moves automatically to the upper left corner of any printed material; if nothing of interest is found, it skips the rest - put something that is focused on the audience (the benefit you offer)
- "People pictures", especially people in action, are better than objects or buildings
- Abundant white space increases readership - that's the area where nothing is printed
- Include a map - so it is easy to find your location

## Producing Printed Materials

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- Before seeing any designer or doing it yourself, prepare. Determine what your message is, and write up the information in as concise a manner as possible. Put together a “storyboard”, or idea about where you think things should go on the page. Also, be a good consumer by noting the items listed in the “Ads that Work” sheet as a guide.
- If you are placing a print ad, the medium often has a staff designer to help you lay out your information (including newspapers and yellow pages).
- For brochures, newsletters or fliers, check your local printer or copy center. Many also have designers who can help you.
- Ask your printer for a selection of papers from which to choose. Get advice on how your materials will look on certain papers. For example, photographs do not print as clearly on some papers as on others.
- If you want to do it yourself, some computer programs that can do simple brochures and newsletters are: Microsoft Publisher and Microsoft Word. Both have templates for several formats that you can easily use if you have any word processing experience. Print Shop Ensemble is helpful for printing your own business cards or stationery.
- Many churches are blessed with designers in their congregation. Ask for volunteers to present ideas, subject to your approval.
- Local chapters of marketing related groups often take on assisting with printed materials and ad campaigns as service projects. Look for the American Marketing Association, International Association of Business Communicators, or Direct Marketing Association. If they do not do service projects, they may know who in your area does pro bono work for non-profits. For public relations assistance, try the Public Relations Society of America.



## Producing Printed Materials *cont.*

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- Is there a commercial art program at a college or university in your area? Contact an instructor to see if there is a program for students to help you. If not, they may be able to refer you to someone who would do the work inexpensively.

## Print Project Plan



### Concept

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Target Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective (action/outcome desired): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will it be used: \_\_\_\_\_

Format: \_\_\_\_\_

Distribution Method(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Planning

How many to print: \_\_\_\_\_ Shelf life: \_\_\_\_\_

Turn around time: \_\_\_\_\_ Budget: \_\_\_\_\_

Due dates: Final copy due: \_\_\_\_\_ Into production: \_\_\_\_\_

To distribution: \_\_\_\_\_ To recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

### Resources

Who is responsible? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will design/set? \_\_\_\_\_

How/where will it be printed? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will distribute? \_\_\_\_\_

## Newsletter Know-How

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- If you use photos, **always** include a caption - people will read them!
- Readers will skim your newsletter for bits of information they will find useful right away, and chunks of info that won't be so useful.
- Make articles short and to the point. Follow the newspaper model, where you answer, who, what, when, where, and why. The headline is the most important part. The first paragraph should also contain crucial information, not the details.
- Use headings and subheadings - break up long articles in this way, especially.
- Include plenty of pictures to illustrate what you're talking about - many pictures are "hooks" that pull the reader into the topic.
- Use captions or sidebars to provide extra detail or explore issues related to the main topic.
- Use quotations from people you are writing about - it brings the reader closer to the topic.
- Use the *USA Today* as a model - it breaks up topics into sub-sections, into bite-sized pieces.
- Also see the page on Ads that Work - many of these items apply to newsletters too.
- Look at newsletters you receive, and at other printed materials for ideas.

## Direct Mail Campaigns

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**Determine objectives of the program in advance.** Do you want it to generate awareness, change attitudes, make contacts to be followed up later, or generate action?

**Determine the target audience.** You will need to know this in order to target your mailing. You can purchase mailing lists, or ask your local phone company for a “reverse” directory. In it you will find listings by street address, allowing you to target people in a given area.

**Develop mailing lists.** When possible, test new lists with other mailings before committing a great deal of money to a mailing. The best list is the one you already have, containing people you have had some contact with. Any time you can collect sign-up cards from visitors to any event, they can be added to your list.

**Develop effective copy.** Invest in the best graphics and compelling messages you can get. This is seldom wasted, since people are more likely to pay attention to the piece. Also, any time you send something out, you are communicating something about who you are. Always ask yourself if the piece conveys an image you are comfortable with, since it may be the only contact some people have with you.

**Pretest.** The ideal way is to send it in the mail to a small number of people in your target audience. You might even want to follow up with a phone call to ask them if they remember it and get their reaction. At the least, show it to someone who is not intimately involved with the process, and who will give you an objective opinion.

**Schedule mailings.** For events, the best time to send mailings is 6 to 8 weeks beforehand. They are not generally effective the week before the event. Also consider multiple mailings, knowing that it takes many exposures to material for it to be remembered. You can send a letter and brochure, with a follow-up postcard, for example.

**Track responses.** This will be your best barometer of what works and what doesn't. This is why including a self addressed response card can be helpful. Eventually, you will know what kind of return to expect from your mailing.

## Church Signs

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- Keep words to a minimum
- Avoid “Unity only” words, or those not understood by the general population
- Use easy to read lettering (simple typestyles are best, with red or black on white the best colors)
- Make sure it is in a place where it is easy to read, easy to find
- Remember that signs are there for those who are unfamiliar with your facility
- Message types to consider:
  - to find the church
  - to find a parking place (i.e., “newcomer parking” - it reminds congregants of the ministry of hospitality and makes newcomers welcome)
  - if the person is handicapped
  - to enter the correct door
  - to find the worship space
  - to find the nursery or church school
  - to find the office
  - to find the restrooms
- To evaluate, drive past the church with the eyes of someone who knows nothing about it, and do the same upon entering the building and look for the items listed above
- Be sure to check your municipal code department for any regulations before purchasing an outdoor sign
- Here’s a visibility chart to use in determining letter size:

<u>Distance</u>	<u>Letter Height</u>
10’	1”
15’	2”
30’	3”
40’	4”
60’	6”
80’	8”