

3 Ways A Local Church Can Up Their Comms Game

Dan Wilt with Mark Crosby

Getting good at communicating the story of your community, and the Story of God that undergirds it, is not primarily about learning the latest social media tricks, or conquering the blogosphere. Representing the life of your community online is a combination of elements: creating a great church, coupled with curating a great, consistent online voice in a few areas native to you, coupled with knowing your tools of distribution well.

Here are some tips to help you in that journey.

1. Tell A Great Story

It's a Story-War out there, and stories are magnets of the soul. Every day, people are being bombarded with stories that tell them who they are, what is meaningful, who is a winner, and what God should be like. As followers of Jesus, we have powerful stories – both in the Scriptures and in our churches – that can halt people in their tracks.

Here is a basic outline I use for telling a great story.

L – LINK with your reader/listener (Ex. You've probably experienced the pain of.... Connect on a human level.)

I – INSPIRE your reader/listener (Ex. Tell them the story, with emotion and passion, as an epic moment.)

F – FAITH-BUILD your reader/listener (Ex. Jesus said that signs would follow those who follow Him....)

E – ENCOURAGE your reader/listener (Ex. If you're feeling like that today, there is Hope....)

2. Recognize That You Are A Broadcaster

Once we have the story or message we want to tell, use the online distribution tools that fit your personality, the personality of your church, and the target community to which you want to reach out.

In the age of 'small broadcasting' we have tools like Social Media, Apps, Smart Phones, Text Messaging, and Websites through which we can tell stories – in 140 characters, in video, or in a blog post. Rather than blurt all the information at once, we can steady the stream, so instead there is a constant trickle from us to the world.

We are all broadcasters, and by this definition we can choose the manner and frequency of our messages. The earth is always wet, but rather than flooding it and then watching it dry out, keep it watered at a steady pace.

3. Know Your Tools & How To Use Them

Only 2 percent of church members ever invite an unchurched person to church. Social media helps to bring down barriers – it blows your cover for you. Encourage those in your church to share a post from your church, or to retweet a tweet. That little item becomes a talking point when you next have a conversation with someone not in church and begins to raise awareness of your church.

Each smartphone user has **7.4 communication apps** on their phone, at their disposal. Are we attempting to use these to our advantage? The platform is already paid for – all we need to do is utilize it.

As churches, if we want to be where the people are, then we need to be making the most of Social Media:

- Twitter 284 million
- Instagram 300 million
- Facebook 1.3 billion

Social media video views are a huge player now:

Facebook videos: 12.3 billion video views

YouTube videos: 11.3 billion video views

In other words, Facebook video is overtaking Youtube as the preferred way to receive video content. Users are dictating this.

So how are you using video and where are you putting it? To maintain momentum, find fresh ways to maintain connectivity with your audience.

- o Facebook (tell stories, be real and personable, avoid narcissism, highlight Kingdom activity)
- o Instagram (tell a story through a picture; it's worth a thousand words)
- o Twitter (tell a short story, or a story through an image, always pointing them to a fuller story)
- o Blog (tell longer stories, provide a service)
- o YouTube (tell video stories)
- o Vimeo (tell well-crafted video stories)
- o Podcasts and/or Soundcloud (find ways to connect people with your messages)
- o Mobile and Tablet apps (show up in multiple places with the same content)
- o Email (know your target group, and only send vital info)
- o SMS (set up text for exciting lead ins to events)

Mix up your formats, but maintain a similarity so that people know and recognise your 'brand.'

- o Videos
- o GIFs
- o Imagery
- o Testimony
- o Links
- o Invitational text

These are just a few tips on upping your communication game as a pastor, leader, or as a local church. Bless you as you tell the Story of God through all the means available to you – to those God has given you to reach.