

Social Media 101

Session Description

Social Media isn't the newest thing, but it is rapidly becoming one of the most important communication's medium in the world. However, many, if not most, churches are missing the boat when it comes to using social media effectively. In this episode, Drs. Bill and Kris share the whys and hows of effective church social media participation.

Session Outline

For better or worse, Social Media is an integral part of today's culture

For Worse

- It can be a major distraction
- It can facilitate isolation
- It can erode privacy
- It can erode boundaries
- It can be a marketing nightmare

For Better

- It encourages transparency
- It erodes compartmentalism
- It provides inexpensive marketing opportunities
- It facilitates networking
- It's one of the preferred communication tools for the under 30s

Three Tools: Twitter, Blogs, and Facebook

Twitter

- Largely used for celebs and marketing business to business or business to client
- Large capacity means your message may be seen by limited audience
- Set up church Twitter account ... do not use personal account
- Using hash tags such as #ChurchTalkTV coupled with RSS from Twitter.com can make it more useful
Example: <http://twitter.com/#!/search/%23ChurchTalkTV> (%23 = #)
- When linked to Facebook, Tweets will update FB account ... a nice shortcut
- Nice tool for notifying blog or entry update: WordPress Blog > Twitter > Facebook

Blogs

- Every pastor should have one
- Set one up free at WordPress.com or Blogger.com (or add one to your webpage)
- Best Practices
 - Post at least weekly
 - Typically post just a couple of paragraphs

- Keep it themed (observations, humor, devotions, insights)
- Use images, video, bullet points
- Connect it to your Twitter and Facebook accounts

Facebook

Three Facebook Options for Churches: Business Page, Personal Account, Celebrity Account

- Business Account
 - Probably best for churches ... uses “fans” rather than “friends”
 - Search Engine Friendly
 - Use a church email address, not a personal email address (office@MyChurch.org)
 - No need to “approve” fans – posts automatically go to all fans
 - You can track user information (demographics, etc.)
 - Add staff as administrators
- Personal Account
 - It’s a personal account ... use it for “business,” even churches, and you risk being deleted by FB
 - Limited to 5000 friends
 - Search Engine Friendly
 - Messy in terms of relocating ... ethics require a church leader “unfriend” all church members
 - No demographic information available
- Celebrity Account
 - Staff personal account – use a church domain email (pastor@MyChurch.org)
 - Easy to deal with upon leaving church ... just delete the account
 - Clear separation between personal and church
- Facebook Advertising
 - One of the best internet advertising tools ... even for churches
 - Advertise events, sermon series, etc.
 - Ad = Image, Title, Short Description
 - Target geographically, by interest, by age
 - Pay Per Click bids – set a budget

Using Social Media

- It’s social, so plan on being social ... people expect to get to know you personally
 - Limit your transparency level – but be “real”
 - No one cares what you had for dinner unless ...
- Update regularly ... remember that most posts are seen in real time
- Post images and videos, not just verbiage
- Invite feedback, but indirectly (ask questions)
- Be interactive

- People follow, friend, and fan based on content ... make it worthwhile
- Invite your followers, friends, and fans to events/services/dialogs etc.
 - When “titling” events, sermons, etc. think social media interest ... will it catch an unchurched person’s attention?

The Ten Commandments of Social Media for the Church

1. Remember what you post will remain in print for a long time – don’t embarrass yourself
2. Post only content your church board, denominational ethics board, past and future employers, parents, spouse, children, and *especially your grandmother* would approve of and applaud
3. Never respond to conflict via social media (nor by email for that matter)
4. Thou shalt not flame anyone
5. Keep your politics to yourself – completely to yourself
6. Never disparage or embarrass another church or church leader (or anyone else)
7. Limit the “causes” you support – and never beg for anything
8. Limit your social media time ... you really do have better things to do most of the time
9. When in doubt, don’t post/update
10. When you leave the church, leave

Discussion Questions

1. How much time do you spend each week (or day) on social media?
2. How do you think social media is hurting the church? How can it help the church?
3. Do you have a favorite blog or Twitter feed? What makes it a favorite?
4. If you have a church Facebook page, take a look at it. Is it current? Interesting? Active?
5. How could your church use social media more effectively?