

# **Church Marketing Plan**

## **Online Tutorial**

### **Jackie Vaughan**

Director, Impact Community and Media Services  
United Methodist Communications | Nashville, TN

### **Chuck Niedringhaus**

Director, Research  
United Methodist Communications | Nashville, TN



**Thank you for joining us.**

Today, we want to introduce you to our newest resource, called "Church Marketing Plan" Found on United Methodist Communication web site, [www.umcom.org/churchmarketingplan](http://www.umcom.org/churchmarketingplan).

**Go to web site**

We know your church wants to impact lives, helping people know Christ and engage them through Christian discipleship. We want to show you how customizing a marketing plan can help you accomplish your goals.

Marketing is part of the infrastructure for growth. It is meant to support a work that God is doing, not replace it. It involves every entity and interaction. Church pulpit message, signage, street address, business cards, altar call, etc.

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### **Definition**

"Marketing is the process of the church identifying and meeting, or contributing to the spiritual, community (sense of belonging) and service needs of its neighbors and surrounding neighborhood."

—*Overcoming Your Fear of Flying*

Let's look at the definition of marketing as described in this resource.

"Marketing is the process of the church identifying and meeting or contributing to the spiritual, community (sense of belonging) and service needs of its neighbors and surrounding neighborhood." - [Overcoming Your Fear of Flying](#)

If you have a better definition then please substitute. However, no matter what definition you and your church choose, the point of a marketing outreach plan is to develop services and ministries to attract and to satisfy the needs or wants of individuals within your marketplace (community).

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By building your Plan, we think your church can realize successes in

- prospering and growing in the areas where God has uniquely gifted your church.
- improving how you communicate with and impact the people you want to reach.
- being good stewards of church resources (time, energy, money, people, facilities), ensuring they are working together for your church to be most effective.

As your church leaders invest time, energy and prayer into this process, you will create a workable plan that takes the unique church God has created you to be and connect you to the people you need to reach.

- Step 1 Values & Vision**
- Step 2 Perception & Needs**
- Step 3 Strategy**
- Step 4 Implementation**
- Step 5 Evaluation**

There are only five steps to this workbook



You might be tempted to jump into tactics. **Don't!**

The first half of the process is the most important **AND you'll miss out on all the fun.**

Working through the first steps lays the foundation for **YOUR MARKETING PLAN'S** messaging, focus, direction and most fruitful opportunities. The exercises are designed for your team to have fun and celebrate your church's impact and to dream about its potential.

**[Move to Website](#)**



So Let's explore I'll bring up the site.

Each Step has a 1 minute introductory video. You can use each video to introduce the steps to your committee.

From the **Theology bar** you can see the scripture and theological foundation for the marketing plan.

**Luke 5:27-32 Jesus Calls Levi**

**Next navigation bar displays the icons that serve to help with direction. These icons will appear at designated places within the 5 steps.**

**Next is the PROCESS bar and here we begin to layout who is needed to begin.**

This is in many respects a church-wide endeavor.

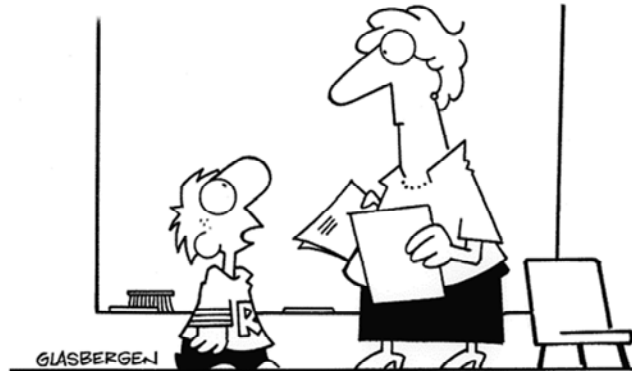
Your congregation can contribute toward the process and ultimately its successes. While some leaders may take on key roles such as coordinating the process, driving deadlines, researching, participating in discussions and working through action steps, there will be many opportunities for others to be involved along the way.

Each of the steps will include Overview, Homework Activity Steps and Resources and we'll explore some of those in a moment. Yes,

you heard correctly the word "homework"

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**“I couldn't do my homework because my  
computer has a virus and so do all  
my pencils and pens.”**

There are some essential reports needed before moving on to Step One. There really are no excuses for not gathering these reports. The church office may have some of these.

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#### **Congregational Demographic Report**

You can obtain congregational demographic information by:

- oContacting your lead pastor for official Table 1 & 2 information.
- oPulling reports from a database your church office might keep
- oOr conduct a brief survey. **(CLICK)**

#### **Congregational Behavior and Response Report**

Gather attendance or response data from the past year's ministry programs and initiatives for all ages. You can get this information FROM your church office, conference office, or the [Research Office of General Board of Global Ministries](#). Include:

- oAttendance at events, programs and classes (Worship, UMW, Bible Studies, Wednesday Night Fellowship etc.).
- oResponses to requests for donations (monetary and goods/services).
- oResponses to requests for volunteers. **(Click)**

#### **Community Demographic and Behaviors Report**

Gather demographic and psychographic (behavior/thoughts) information about your community.

For a free copy, Contact your Annual Conference or United Methodist Communications to work with you to obtain this information. The information should include:

- oAge
- oFamily/household situation (single, married, children/no children, other household members)
- oEthnicity
- oEducation level
- oIncome level

Most of the reports we offer are free, while others are available at a minimum cost. **(Click)**

#### **Church Budget and Staffing Report**

The overall church budget, with all communications/marketing expenses , as well as individual ministries expenses noted.

The combination of the church and community assessments provides the framework for making key decisions for the marketing of your church.

Now that wasn't so bad and we can move on to step One

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Adjusting Your View and Moving Ahead

### **Step One**

#### **Values and visions**

- Who your church is. (Values).
- Where your church is going. (Vision). Having a clear vision is crucial to implementing your marketing plan. Do not move forward to Step two without clarity and unity of a vision plan for your church.

#### **Marketing Plan Deliverables**

- Core Values are not something you create, but discover. Core values are intrinsic to the congregation, e.g. personality/
- Demographics Demographic information can help you start making hypotheses of how your church can reach out to the community. Do not make assumptions.

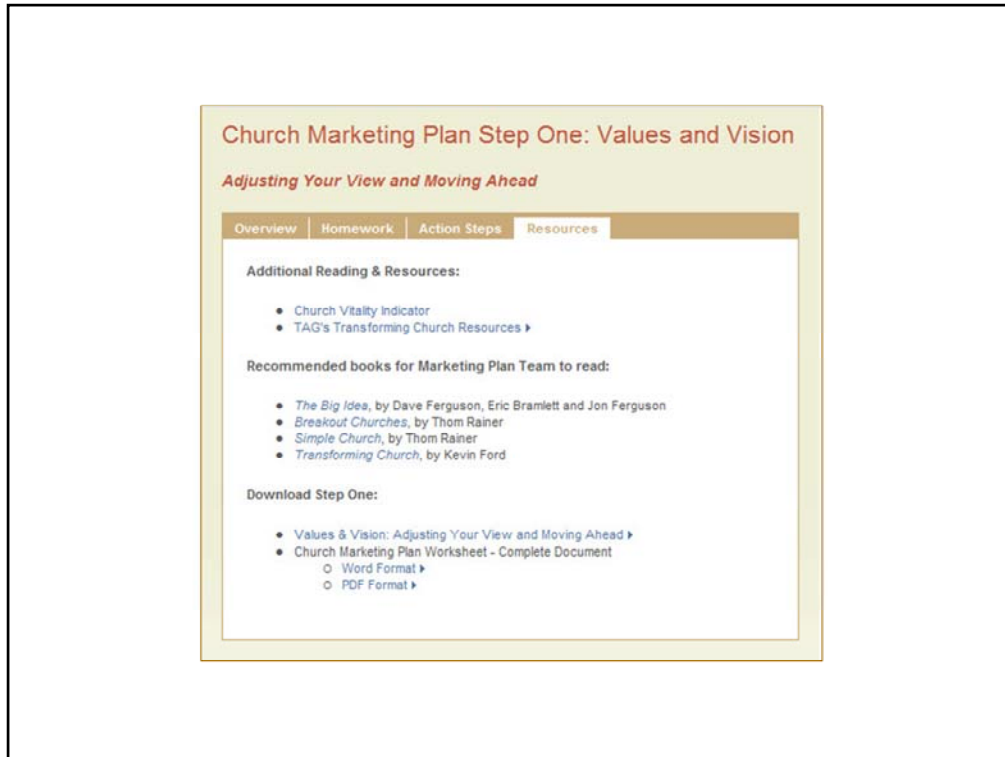


- Vision Statement – Sets you church on a course of direction toward a destination
- Key Messaging/Elevator Statement (develop a description of your church that can be repeated in 60-90 seconds (same time to ride an elevator from the 20<sup>th</sup> floor down.)

I found this one from a UMethodist church web site.

*We welcome and include everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, age, economic status, disability, or sexual orientation. Our doors are open. Our love is unconditional.* Everyone in your congregation should be able to repeat their visioning statement

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Under the Resources Tab

- Use the Church Marketing Plan Worksheet downloadable under The Resource Tab within each Step. You can use this form to building your workbook.

Also, notice the additional recommended resources and reading materials

- [Church Vitality Indicator](#)
- [TAG's Transforming Church Resources](#)

**Recommended books for Marketing Plan Team to read:**

- [The Big Idea](#), by Dave Ferguson, Eric Bramlett and Jon Ferguson
- [Breakout Churches](#), by Thom Rainer
- [Simple Church](#), by Thom Rainer
- [Transforming Church](#), by Kevin Ford

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### **Step Two Perception and Needs.**

The management of Perceptions-- ("You never get a second chance to make a first impression.") Our job is to create an atmosphere of love and joy that people hunger for.

Create Value.

Think externally-- What do people (community) see and hear about us?

Why would someone choose to visit?

What draws people to us?

What is it about us that would make them think we have the answer and we would welcome them in? What sets us apart?

**Back to Web site Step Two**

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**Church Marketing Plan Step Two: Perception and Needs**  
*Getting Your Bearings and Meeting Those Around You*

Overview | Homework | Action Steps | Resources

**STEP 2: WHAT'S INVOLVED**

**Homework**

- Homework 1: Perception ▶
- Homework 2: Community Needs ▶

**Action Steps**

- Action Step 1: Congregational Survey or Team/Committee/Group Interview ▶
- Action Step 2: Newer Member Focus Groups ▶
- Action Step 3: Community Survey or Community Member Gatherings ▶

**Marketing Plan Deliverables**

- Congregational Survey Results or Interview Summaries Report
- Focus Group Summaries Report
- Community Survey Report or Community Member Gatherings Report

. This step will also help your Marketing Team identify:

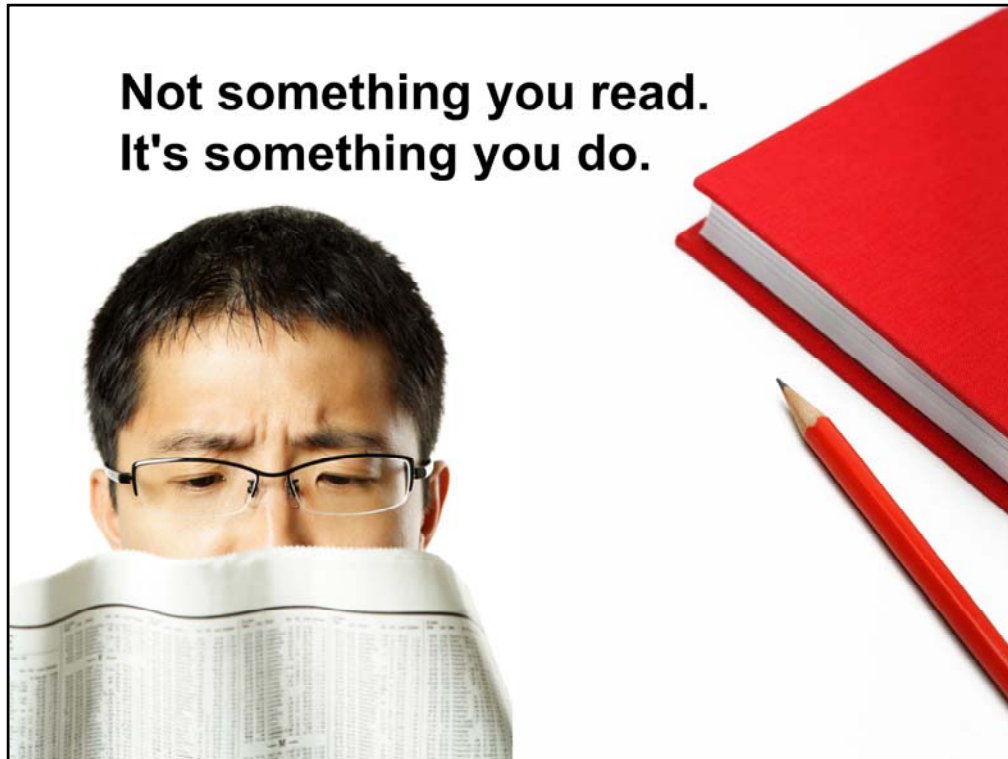
- Needs: Open your eyes to your congregation and community's needs. Then determine if your church already has resources/abilities to meet those needs or if new ministries need to be developed.

How people view your church from their own point of view. This perception may well be different from an outside or community perspective.

### **Marketing Plan Deliverables**

- Congregational Survey Results or Interview Summaries Report
- Focus Group Summaries Report
- Community Survey Report or Community Member Gatherings Report

**Next Slide**



**Not something you read. It's something you do.**

As your team works through the homework, reflects about your church and conducts the action steps, you will grow to understand marketing and its value to your church. We provide many resources and additional reading for you to build on your working knowledge.

Because the process has a highly interactive approach, your team plays the key role in developing the Plan. You learn, discover, assess and plan according to your church's personality, vision and available resources. Therefore, making the Plan completely customized for your church.

As your team works through the homework, reflects about your church and conducts the action steps, you will grow to understand marketing and its value to your church.

## Step 3 – Perception and Needs

- SWOT
- Target audience
- Strategic objectives
- Goals

Step 3 is a critical stage in developing your Church Marketing Plan. It includes four very important segments: the SWOT analysis, the identification of a target audience, the selection of strategic objectives, and the setting goals.

**SWOT**

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats



The lesson plan leads you in the development of a SWOT analysis – that stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT can help your church determine the strategies it needs to develop to reach its goals. It starts by helping you identify the strengths your church has in reaching its vision. It also leads you through the process of identifying the barriers that you have to overcome.

Strengths are things your church does well and is known for. Weaknesses are things your church doesn't do particularly well or perceptions of the church that work against its vision.

Unfortunately, development of a SWOT is also a time to watch for self-delusion. We have a natural tendency to promote most of the things we do as strengths, particularly when we are talking about our work or the work of our friends. We have to be truthful, though. Identifying something as a weakness, doesn't mean that the person working on that area is a failure at what they do. It could mean that something else is affecting the performance you would like to achieve.

For instance, let's say that your church vision calls for a dynamic church for families with children. Yet, your church has a very small youth program. The congregation is older and doesn't have children of age for UMYF. Even if the group leader is doing a stellar job, you may need to admit that the youth program is not going to draw new people to your church. Identifying the current youth program as a weakness only says that it needs to be addressed. Your **leader** may actually be a strength, but the entire program as it currently stands isn't going to be an asset without some attention. As a result you might have steps related to increasing the visibility of your efforts in the area. That might mean trying to get MYF members to invite friends and neighbors to a special event, having the group become more involved in community service or opening your church up after school with mentoring programs available to everyone.

This is also the part of the process where you apply your findings from your research. How does your church stack up with changing demographics? What have church members identified as areas of satisfaction? What do people in the community think of the church and its activities? All of these come into play as you decide what is a "strength" and what is a weakness.

## Target Audience



- Primary audience for communications and ministry development
- Needs and motivations

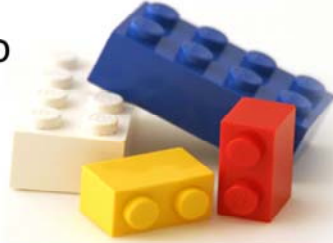
Step 3 also will ask you to define your target audience. A target audience is the group that you focus your communications on. It doesn't mean you won't serve other groups, but it says that most of your communications and program development will seek to serve this group. Selecting a target audience represents a commitment to understanding the likes, dislikes, needs and motivations of people in that group. It means you will focus on topics of interest to that group and use language that they use and understand.

To extend the earlier example, a church seeking to serve families with children may know that their audience is interested in Mother's Morning Out, after-school activities for kids, activities for teens, and programs that instill a good moral foundation in their children. They might also want small group learning opportunities with people in their own age group.

This is a step that trips up many organizations. They define their audience as everyone. That's not a target; that's a universe. If you don't focus, you're probably not going to reach anyone successfully.

## Step 3: Strategic Objectives

- What your church will do to address a target audience need
  - Tied to church vision
  - Based on a strength or to address a weakness
  - Broken into goals and action steps
  - Understanding of resources



The next part of Step 3 is the identification of strategic objectives. Based on your knowledge of your target audience and your SWOT, your planning team may decide to capitalize on a strength with an eye to addressing a need of the target audience. For example, our church with the older congregation that wants to serve families with children might decide to leverage their close proximity to a school and the free time that many of its well-educated members have to offer an after-school program for kids, offering care, mentoring, and related activities. Their strategic objective may be “to expand the number of ways we interface with youth in our neighborhood.” Objectives are important for two reasons, they tie to your action steps and they lead to the development of goals

## Step 4 – Plan and Implementation

- Tactics
- Building the plan
  - Vision
  - Target Audience
  - Objectives
  - The Goal the tactic is working toward.
  - The Tactic/Tool/Event
  - Timing (key dates/deadlines)
  - Lead person or team to implement
  - Budget
  - Tracking/Evaluation



Step 4 is where we get into tactics. As Jackie said, please try to avoid jumping straight to tactics. Your church actions need to tie into a vision and set of objectives or you'll find yourself spreading your resources too thinly.

We recommend setting up a brainstorming session to talk about tactics. With a good understanding of what your church is trying to achieve, identifying possible tactics can be one of the more engaging parts of the planning process.

In this brainstorming session try not to judge an idea as soon as its brought it. While the idea may not be on target, it might spur a related proposal that could be a real winner.

In our mythical church we identified our objective as "increase the number of interfaces with community youth". This could lead to a number of proposed activities:

1. We could improve programs already in place
2. We could add activities and events, such as fun things like "lock-ins", trips, movie nights. The activities could be community service events, like mission trips, community clean ups, manning victory gardens to serve the less fortunate.

The key is to be creative and come up with a list that you later can narrow down to the top priorities.

You're now ready to start putting your plan together. Bring out the worksheets on vision, audience, objectives, goals and tactics and put things down on paper as a whole. Now you apply resources, people, and timelines to proposed activities.

This is the document that you eventually have to have your church leaders endorse and support.

## Step 5 – Evaluation And Adjustment

- Marketing as process
  - Plan execution
  - Adaptive and learning
  - Achievement of goals
    - Next steps
  - Celebration of successes



By Step 5 your planning team will have put in a lot of time and effort. Yet, the really important part is just starting. Doing what you say you're going to do. You'll need to have the plan be very specific about what is done, by whom, and when. Otherwise execution will drag out and reduce your effectiveness. Time can be a silent killer of plans as people's excitement can fall as the actual work begins.

To help keep things on track, you'll need to have your coordinator and the people assigned for specific tasks monitor and report on what is going on with each tactic. People need to have a sense that they are accountable for their work and that what they do is important enough to be monitored.

Not only do you need to watch time lines, you also need to watch for possible results. In setting up your goals, you essentially are saying what you're going to measure. With our example church, we're going to measure the number of new people involved in youth activities. Let's say that the numbers don't increase. Your youth program is still stuck in neutral. Now you have to look at your plan and its tactics and make adjustments. You have to look at your plan as a work in progress, to look at it as a process. If something doesn't work, adjust your activities and try some thing else or decide whether you needed more people involved or more resources.

So plans are adaptive; they need to be reviewed for effectiveness and they need to incorporate your learning as time passes.

Once you achieve a goal, let everyone know about it. Celebrate it! You've accomplished something that will help your church meet its vision.



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**Questions?**





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**Thank you!**

