



ACTION STEP 2: NEWER MEMBER FOCUS GROUPS

Overview

Gain a fresh perspective about what is attracting people to your church in your current reality.

People who are newer to the church (have started coming within the last two years) have a clearer vantage point because their experiences are still fresh. Spending time with them will help you learn what "main things" the church communicates through its messages and decisions because they haven't gotten distracted by the details. It will also help you understand what is *currently* drawing people to the church.

Since the Marketing Plan Team will likely be made up of members who have been part of the church for many years, this step is important to hear the thoughts and perceptions of newer members.

Process

1. Prepare for the Focus Groups

Determine who will be invited and how many focus groups.

The Marketing Plan Coordinator will provide this group of Marketing Team Members with contact information (and length of attendance) for all newer members (those who have connected within the past two years). Members will want to meet with as many newer members as possible.

Focus groups should be made up of at least six, but no more than 10 people. Determine how many focus groups you would like to conduct, based on how many newer members are on the list. (Keep in mind that only a percentage of people on the list will be interested and available to participate.)

Once you determine how many focus groups you want to conduct, set a time and date for each group based on your church's existing schedule. (Consider having one group meet at a lunch after worship services to retain the largest number of people; also consider providing child care).

Invite the participants.

Marketing Team Member(s) make phone calls AND send/email invitations to each person on the list. When inviting people to participate, give a brief overview as to why the focus group is being conducted and what will be done with the information. This should be clear and simple.

Keep a list of who will participate in the focus groups.

2. Administer the Focus Groups

At the focus group gatherings, the facilitator will give a very brief overview as to why the interview is being conducted and what will be done with the information. This should be clear and simple.

The member will begin by asking questions and invite everyone to respond. The questions listed below are a general guide to help you spark conversation and glean valuable information. As participants respond to the questions, ask for elaboration or use their points to direct the group to other lines of thought. Follow their lead.

Questions to consider:

- Why did you start coming to this church?
- Why did you stay?
- Are you involved in a ministry team/committee and/or small group? If so, why and how did you get connected with this group?
- What is your favorite part of this church?
- When describing this church to your friends, what do you say?
- Do you invite friends to this church's activities? Why? Why not?
- What is your favorite thing about this church?
- What would you most want to change about this church?

The interviewer will need to take notes or bring someone along to help him/her capture the information.

Upon completing the focus groups, be sure to thank the group for setting aside time for this and for helping the church make a greater impact.

Things to keep in mind:

- Encourage the groups to be candid, providing positive and negative feedback.
- Ensure confidentiality. You want them to be as candid as possible so ensure their feedback will be submitted anonymously.
- For groups with children, you'll want to adapt questions and build in interactive components, such as drawing pictures or molding with clay.

3. Summarize the Focus Group information

As each Marketing Team Member completes a focus group, he/she will prepare a summary of his/her findings. The summary should include common themes under each of the questions listed above.



Step 2: Deliverable

The Marketing Plan Coordinator (or his/her designee) will prepare a report with the collective focus group summaries. He/she will include the comprehensive data as well as a summary of findings under each of the questions.

Once the report is prepared, the Marketing Plan Coordinator will distribute copies to the Marketing Team Members who will participate in **Step 3: Strategy**.



CAPTURE!

During this **Action Step**, Marketing Team Members might hear exciting stories about how lives have been impacted by your church.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to capture these stories!

- Make a note of the story and the type of impact the story communicates (my kids learned about Jesus here, this church healed my marriage, I found my purpose through this small group).
- As you begin to develop tactics for marketing your message, refer back to these stories and draw on them to communicate your message with exponential impact. (Using live, video, or written testimonies or other creative ways to showcase these testimonies. Plan to share these stories during worship services or on your Web site).