



## ACTION STEP 1: TACTICS BRAINSTORMING & PRIORITIZING

### Overview

In this session, the team will come together to focus on the opportunity and brainstorm a lengthy list of potential tactics/tools/ideas. All ideas and suggestions will be valued in this session! There are no bad or wrong ideas in brainstorming.

Once all possible ideas have been considered, the team will prioritize those ideas into the top priorities and begin defining details for implementation.



#### **How long will it take?**

Three to four hours



#### **Why?**

- This session will allow the group to develop a lengthy list of potential tactics/tools/ideas to be considered to support the church's efforts to reach its target audience and goals/measurable objectives. Then they'll prioritize that list for implementation.
- The Marketing Plan Team will be more likely to develop strong and strategic tactics because the entire group contributed to the brainstorming and planning process.
- The session will provide significant information to be included in **YOUR MARKETING PLAN**, which will be written/finalized soon after this session.

## Preparation

The Marketing Plan Coordinator will:

- Plan the agenda, discussion questions and brainstorming activities for **Action Step 1: Tactics Team Brainstorming Session** and distribute it to each team member for their homework.
- Pray for each team member involved and the brainstorming session
- Confirm each team member's participation and homework prep for the session
- Ensure appropriate space is reserved for the session and planning what supplies are needed: self-stick easel pads, laptop (with Internet access for viewing the Rethink Church info), food/drinks, creative toys like modeling clay and crayons, etc. (see NOTE).
- Reviewing the agenda and making detailed notes about what information he/she wants to share
- Having a plan for the specific brainstorming exercises he/she plans to lead

***NOTE to the Marketing Plan Coordinator:*** *To learn more about planning for this brainstorming session, hosting it in the right space and making it "creative," and conducting brainstorming exercises, see "Brainstorming Resources #1 and #2" at the end of this document. You may decide to provide the brainstorming "rules"/guidelines from Resource #1 to the Marketing Team as they prepare for this session.*

## Process

- **Open in prayer (5 min.):** Pray for creativity and fresh ideas that will allow your church to connect with its target audience in strong ways so that more people can know about your church and your Savior.
- **Focus the team (10 min.):** On how you got to this meeting (**YOUR MARKETING PLAN** process), what you have learned/know (our target audience, goals/measurable objectives, etc.), and the opportunity you have (to come up with new or enhanced tactics for connecting with our target audience).
- **Review the Objectives, Goals and Target Audience (5 min.):** Reacquaint yourselves with your Objectives, Goals and Target Audience (identified in **Step 3: Strategy**). As you're brainstorming tactics, continually review this "strategy" and "profile" to help you consider ideas that are relevant to your target audience members.
- **Rethink Church (15 min.):** The United Methodist Church launched this national communications campaign in April 2009. The campaign's messaging and supporting tactics/tools can be viewed at <http://www.rethinkchurch.org/>. As part of this session, discuss if this national campaign – and specifically the "Rethink Church" communications tools – could help raise awareness in our local community about your church and support your own local marketing efforts.

**Note to the Marketing Plan Coordinator:** *As part of this session, you may want to have a laptop (with Internet access) ready so that you can give a quick preview of the Rethink Church campaign/materials that are available.*

- **Brainstorm/Discussion (30-40 min.):** Facilitator focuses the group on the task at hand. Share something like the following:

*"As we brainstorm, think very specifically about objectives and goals and who our target audience is, what keeps them busy, what they are focused on, what they do in their free time, etc. Brainstorm tactics that take these details into account. For example, if we're trying to reach out to families with children, should we consider what we can do in our community to support the organizations where families/kids spend a lot of their time, like Moms Morning Out or Boy Scouts? Let's brainstorm what our church could do to support our local schools, parks/recreation programs or library (and reach the families through these interactions)?"*

Facilitator asks participants to refer to their homework. Each person shares their response to the question: What are the tactics/tools/ideas we should consider to meet our objectives/goals and reach our target audience?

*(Depending on the size of the group, break the group down into smaller groups of 5 to 8 or conduct it with the entire group.)*

- **Additional Ideas (45-60 min.):** Building on the creativity sparked in the last activity, bring the group together (or continue to work in small groups) to discuss additional tactics/tools/ideas. You may consider a role play setting to further spur ideas. Divide the group between people who play your target audience and those who play your church marketing team. Ask the marketing team to interview the target audience to understand their attitudes, behavior, perceptions and needs.



## STOP!

Encouraging creativity and open discussion throughout the brainstorming process can be fun and energizing and is crucial to the success of **YOUR MARKETING PLAN!**

It could be easy to rush or put a damper on fresh ideas. In the resources portion of this step, you will find suggestions and tips for guiding this creative brainstorming work.

If at any point you find:

- **The brainstorming process is being rushed** – spending time individually or as a team to “dream” of new ideas seems unnecessary or is not a priority for some; or
- **New ideas are being squelched** – as team members have new ideas to share, the conversation is being negatively impacted by conversation that says we’ve tried that before or our church can’t do that because of a lack of budget, resources, etc.

**Then STOP!** Take time to review the brainstorming tips and techniques that are listed in this section. An important part of developing Your Marketing Plan will be intentionally helping the Marketing Plan Team be creative and think openly throughout this brainstorming work. Strong and strategic tactics – ones that will be much more likely to impact your target audience and get those in your congregation engaged – will result!

- **Prioritize (30-45 min.):** Facilitator brings the larger group (if applicable) together to report on their ideas.

**Facilitator then works to find consensus among the group to prioritize the tactics into the "top 10"** (based on which tactics can have the most impact in helping reach the goals/objectives and connecting with the target audience and are in line with the resources your church has available).

Once the group has found consensus around the "top 10" discuss the following:

- **What items must/should we focus on for the short-term (for the next 6 months)?** (Get as specific as possible with the timeline for each item. Consider the church calendar/holidays/major events of the year as you're planning. You'll want to take advantage of both the busy times and quieter times in the life of your church as you're formulating the Marketing Plan.)
- **What might be implemented longer-term (6 mon. to 18 mon. out)?** (Get as specific as possible with the timeline for each item. Again, consider the church calendar/holidays/major events of the year as you're planning.)
- **What are strong ideas we will hold onto for the future (beyond 18 months)?**



## **STOP & PRIORITIZE!**

REALITY CHECK! It would be tempting for the Marketing Plan Team to want to move forward with many of the tactics/tools recently brainstormed. (Why not? They came up with many great ideas throughout this brainstorming process! Right?)

However, the Marketing Plan Coordinator will want to emphasize the importance of prioritizing with this group. Start with a realistic number of tactics (probably about a handful of tactics) that you'll identify as your short-term priorities as part of this process. Focus on those for the coming six months.

Then, move to your longer-term tactics for the next six to 12 or 18 months, as determined through this process. If you move more quickly, the Team can update the Plan and take on more tactics.

This realistic approach will make success more likely and give your Team – and your entire congregation with the community – reasons to celebrate!

- **Launching and communications to the congregation (30 min.):** Discuss as a team when the Marketing Plan efforts should be launched and communicated about to the congregation.

***Note to the Marketing Plan Coordinator:*** To learn more about launching and communicating to the congregation, see the "Launching and Communicating to the Congregation" Resource below. You may decide to provide this resource to the Marketing Team before or during this session.