



ACTION STEP 3: MARKETING PLAN APPROVAL & IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

It's time to begin using the strong plan you've developed!

It's your church's roadmap both now and into the future to organize, guide and monitor/track your efforts to connect and communicate with your target audience and community.

The Marketing Plan Team has worked hard! And God is going to bless these efforts!

Process

The process for implementing your **MARKETING PLAN** will depend on your church's unique organization and culture. The steps are outlined below. You need to decide who will carry out those steps based on leadership, decision making and staff/laity roles and responsibilities.

Approval/Endorsement

Your **MARKETING PLAN** needs to be approved and official endorsed by church leaders. This process will affirm the Marketing Plan Team's "labor of love" and ensure that the plan is valued and implemented.

Accountable Responsibility

Each person responsible for implementing the plan needs to hear from his/her staff or volunteer "supervisor" that the plan is important and necessary for the church to make an impact. If applicable, accountability for implementation should be included as part of staff members' job descriptions and annual reviews.

Communication

The success of your **MARKETING PLAN** begins with the lead Pastor endorsing it. He/she in association with the marketing coordinator should present it to the congregation. He/she should also share enthusiasm about the plan and anticipation for the impact it will make with the entire congregation.

Implement

Use your **MARKETING PLAN** as a working document. Continually visit the timelines/measurements, evaluating and adapting for ongoing success. (See **Step 5: Evaluation** for more information about evaluation.)

Additional Reading & Resources

Resource: Brainstorming #1

What is brainstorming? What are some tips and guidelines for effective brainstorming?

The brainstorming and creative thinking that you and your team will be encouraged to do in **Action Step 1: Tactics Team Brainstorming Session** can be fun and energizing.

Brainstorming is an individual or group idea-generating activity where people are encouraged to think in a more free and creative manner to come up with solutions to a challenge or opportunity.

Tips and guidelines for effective brainstorming

- **Ideal group size:** A small group of 4-8 people is ideal for a brainstorming session. In this case, you'll be involving your Marketing Plan Team members.
- **Facilitation/capturing all the notes:** The Marketing Coordinator (or someone else designated in the group) should facilitate the Team Brainstorming Time, gently enforce the guidelines listed below, and write down all of the ideas shared. Ideally, self-stick easel pad sheets could be used for writing down all the ideas, so that when a sheet is filled it could be hung in the room for later reference throughout the brainstorming session.
- **Make it comfortable and fun:** As you're planning this session, consider where you'll be brainstorming (a relaxed, comfortable and quiet space is ideal), what food/drinks you may want to offer, and what "creative toys" you want to have on hand. Some items to consider might be modeling clay, paper/crayons/markers, yo-yos, a slinky, etc.
- **Make it purposeful:** Focus the brainstorming team before and/or at the beginning of the session by communicating about the purpose of the brainstorming session and clearly state what the opportunity is (reaching our target audience through new tactics).
- **Brainstorming "rules":** Throughout the brainstorming time, gently, but confidently, enforce these guidelines:
 - Encourage everyone to share all throughout the session. Intentionally ask anyone who is more quiet or reserved to share his/her ideas. (You can even go around the room in a more organized manner to allow everyone to share.)
 - Keep the team positive and focused on generating fresh ideas, as many as possible.
 - Avoid criticizing any ideas, asking questions about how that idea might be accomplished or other negative comments. There are no bad or wrong ideas in brainstorming! If people start to criticize the comments, it puts a significant damper on the session. You want everyone to freely offer their ideas. There's no telling how when a variety of ideas are discussed, more and new ideas are developed.

- Encourage participants to listen to one another and “piggy back” (or add on to) other ideas offered.
- Keep the brainstorming focused on the specific opportunity and purpose for today’s session. (Your session doesn’t need to discuss the church’s leaky roof or the need for a different color of carpet throughout the facility!)
- The brainstorming discussion shouldn’t go too deep into discussing any details. Once an idea is presented, the group doesn’t need to figure out who, what or when this idea would be implemented. That is planning for another time.

Resource: Brainstorming #2

What are some brainstorming activities our Marketing Plan Team can use?

Here are several brainstorming exercises to consider. Plan ahead to use two or maybe three techniques (if time permits and you want to generate more discussion) in the **Action Step**

1: Tactics Team Brainstorming Session.

- **Let's Draw It:** First, ask each person to draw a picture of the opportunity (helping the church connect to your target audience & welcoming more people to your church and Christ) and how this opportunity makes you feel. Then, have each person draw a second picture about how they would feel if this opportunity was met with success. Third, have each person draw how to get from picture #1 to picture #2. After these drawings are complete, go around the room and have every person share about their drawings. What ideas/tactics are shared? Write them down and discuss.
- **Best Practices:** Have each person consider (on their own) how other companies and organizations communicate with them and which of those tactics are really noticeable/motivating/touching, etc. Have team members share. Look for ideas discussed that your church could modify in some way and implement. (You could also mention this Action Step ahead of time and ask group members to bring "show and tell" items (other company's brochures, Web sites, giveaway items, etc.) that would help depict the impact of how these companies communicate.)
- **Yes, and:** Each person brainstorms by adding to what another team member has already said. There is never a "Yes, but this is what I was thinking ..." said during this brainstorming Action Step. Only "Yes, and here is what I would add ..." is allowed. This allows the ideas to keep building on one another.
- **Get Fired:** You ask the group to brainstorm the most outrageous/most noticeable/most expensive tactics they can think of. (Ideas that would get the team "fired" if they were actually implemented.) Then you'll spend some time considering how you could scale down these ideas into strong, doable options.
- **Pass It Around:** Get each person to write a new idea at the top of a piece of paper (or this could be done on self-stick easel pad sheets and hung around the room), and then hand it to the next person to build on (by writing things down). You continue building on the ideas as the papers make their way around the room. Then stop the activity and discuss each sheet of ideas as a group.
- **Small Groups:** The group divides into pairs (or groups of 3). Individuals in each group write down their ideas on index cards or post-it notes. Each pair or threesome organizes/groups these ideas, adds new ones, and then shares with the group.
- **180-degree Thinking:** The team brainstorms the complete opposite of what you would want to accomplish; then you discuss and brainstorm around those "bad" ideas to come up with new thinking and strong tactics.

Resource: Launching and Communicating to the Congregation

Consider conducting a three-week launch within the church. The goal will be to educate and energize members, giving them buy-in and ownership of this new marketing effort and the purpose behind it (to communicate and connect with more people in your community).

Launching & Communications Recommendations:

1. **Staff/Ministry Leaders Communications/Celebration:** As you prepare to go “public” to the congregation about these marketing efforts, be sure all staff and key ministry leaders are aware of this work (and the many ways you’ll need their support to communicate internally and then begin tactics to reach the community). Consider hosting an upbeat/fun lunch, dinner or dessert reception to provide them this information and to celebrate how God is at work in your congregation and community.
2. **Sermon series:** Encourage your lead pastor to conduct a three-week sermon series. The series could explain the need and vision for this new effort, God’s calling for all of us to love our neighbors/reach out, and specific ways that the congregation can get involved and support the effort.
3. **“Unveil” key components from the Marketing Plan to your church (in worship services, in written communications, on the pastor’s blog, etc.):** Communicate to members about your church’s values/vision (“elevator” statement) and highlight exciting tactics from The Plan for reaching out to the community in new and fresh ways. These communications efforts should be done as part of the launch and ongoing for the months/years to come.
4. **Adults:** Build momentum and support throughout Sunday school classes and small groups by providing study materials/lessons that support the sermon series and vision for the Marketing Plan. Have pastors and other key leaders from the Marketing Plan Team visit the various classes and small groups to lead some of these discussions and help answer questions about the church’s new “marketing” effort.
5. **Kids/youth:** Build excitement with the children in your church by including them in this discussion about loving our neighbors and reaching out. During their classes/small groups at church, teach the kids and youth lessons and lead discussions about why we want people to know who we are as a church, why we want to invite friends to church and more.
6. **Families:** Provide families with study materials and discussion questions related to this outreach focus for them to discuss in the car (on the way home from church) or at meal times throughout the week.
7. **Over-communicate about the church’s outreach efforts:** Throughout the launch of these marketing efforts and as the various tactics are being implemented, do your best to over-communicate to the congregation about the church’s efforts. Ask people to get involved and share the results. Give updates in the bulletin, newsletter/e-newsletter, in worship services, your pastor’s preaching/teaching times, on your Web site/blogs and more.
8. **Tell stories:** Keep your ears to the ground. As you hear about success from these efforts (church members being touched in significant ways, community members being reached, etc.), document and tell these stories. Telling stories through video, which can

be shown in worship services and then available on the church's Web site, can be very powerful!

9. **Take time to celebrate:** As the church rallies to support these outreach efforts and as more and more lives are touched, take time to celebrate as a congregation! Host a special celebratory event or serve cake on a Sunday morning. Whatever would be special to your congregation – do it as a means of celebrating, affirming and encouraging for the future!