

# Effective Communication: A Guide for Congregations Marketing and Promotion

## "Communication 101"

**First big question:** Who are your audiences?

Whom do you want to reach?

List audiences:

- # 1
- # 2
- # 3
- # 4

What do you know about each audience? What do you think are the best ways to reach each audience?

- # 1
- # 2
- # 3
- # 4

**Second big question:** What is your message? Is it different for each audience?

Core message:

Specific audience focus for message

- # 1
- # 2
- # 3
- # 4

**Third big question:** What do you want each audience to do?

- # 1
- # 2
- # 3
- # 4

**Things to remember when communicating your message:**

"What's in it for me?" Why should the audience care about what you're trying to tell them? What do they get out of it?

- Participants/volunteers: doing a good thing, connection with other people, fun - what else?
- Donors: doing a good thing, tax deduction ...
- Who else? What else?

Be specific. Tell them what you want them to do subtly - not "give us your money," but "your contribution will help us do important work" or "your donation will make a difference" or "here's how you can help."

- Include the key information: who, what, where, when, how - and most important, how can they reach someone for more information

- How can they connect with you? (Web site, phone number, e-mail)

Tell them how to take the next step

- Keep it simple. People decide what to read or look at or listen to in about a second <whoa, time is up!> It needs to have immediate impact.

## Marketing and Promotion

**The goals:**

- To retain your current people
- To upgrade their commitment
- To attract new people

**So how do you do it?**

**To retain and upgrade, make them feel connected and recognized.** How? By contact:

- e-mail (thank you notes, reminders, etc.)
- newsletters
- phone calls
- Your ideas:

**To attract, build awareness**

- through local media
- word-of-mouth
- direct mail
- posters, flyers, and in congregations through newsletters, announcements, etc.
- Your ideas

**Figure out why some folks aren't interested and address those issues.** (Takes up too much time?

They don't know anyone else involved?) Ask around. Find out what the perceptions are and then address those in your promotion materials, newsletters, etc. Use concrete examples.

**Vehicles for communicating your message inexpensively**

- Posters, flyers, etc., appropriate for a lot of different places
- One-page newsletter (especially good for donors)
- For congregations, pre-made bulletin insert (ready for photocopying) and a blurb for their parish newsletter (already written, ready to go)

- Personal letters (ask members to send a letter to five of their friends, or give you the addresses of five friends who might be interested and you'll send the letter)
- Local newspapers, radio stations, TV news (find the hook, the human-interest story in your message, and then find the right people to contact in your local media)
- E-mail ("viral marketing") send an email about a parish event to folks you know and ask them to pass it along to several others
- Web site
- Signs and outdoor banners
- Your ideas:

### **Tips about printed pieces**

Make your piece inviting and readable, whether it's a poster or newsletter or flyer or brochure. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- White space is inviting. Don't cram in too much text; it will make the page look gray and boring and scare your reader away
- Use headlines, subheads, bullet points and boldface to help your reader find "points of entry"
- Use boxes, graphics, color to break up the page and give the reader's eye a rest - and make connections between items clearer
- Photos interest readers. Pictures of faces draw a reader into the piece. Use a caption to identify the person or event in the photo..
- Limit the number of fonts you use. Otherwise your piece will look like a ransom note. Use one big bold sans serif font for headlines and subheads (this is a sans serif font). Then another for the body text. (like this one with serifs).
- Proofread, proofread, proofread. If possible get someone "fresh" to read your piece before you have it printed.
- Assume your readers are hearing about this for the first time. They don't know the background. Don't take anything for granted.
- If you tell them about your Web site, give the address right there.
- If you use initials or abbreviations (like ELCA) always spell it out on the first reference.
- Make it concrete. Use real examples of real people and quote some folks.
- Use headlines or subheads that are active, that imply (or state) the "you" in what's in it for you - Such as
  - Why you should come to the concert
  - How you can help solve homelessness
  - Find out how our church made an impact

