UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION of Louisiana
"Where Faith and Money Come Together"

3 Tips For Managing Church Communications

Managing communication is critical to the success of any organization, but specifically non-profits that are built on the trust and donations of their members.

People involved in a ministry have a vested interest in what the organization is doing and how they are performing.

Church communication management is about sharing information in a proactive way to keep members informed and engaged.

Being proactive requires having a process for communicating information that members and donors have an interest in.

1. Create a Process for Communicating

The **process** of communication is important because it sets the expectation for how information is shared. This process should be structured enough that those receiving the communication can reasonably predict how and when information will be received.

For example, a new volunteer may receive information about his/her job assignment any number of ways: via email, postal letter, telephone or church website.

Regardless of how he/she receives the assignment, there should be a defined communication process for receiving the information.

Another example might be how church members receive information about new projects the church is working on. Things like adding space to the facilities, creating new staff positions or a new program that is being developed – are all things members are interested in.

This kind of information may be communicated at church meetings, by pulpit announcements, in postal letters, or on the church website. The communication process is not as important as its consistency and thoroughness. The secret to effective communication is to answer the questions **before** they are thought of!

2. Determine What Gets Communicated

Church congregants, volunteers and employees need to receive lots of information, and they should have a good understanding of what kinds of information they can expect to be shared. The ministry should have defined guidelines for what gets communicated, to whom, how often and in what format.

For example, you should determine if it is standard practice to share information about major church purchases or initiatives during the **planning** phase, budgeting phase or **after** all the details are figured out?

Regardless, church communications should adhere to pre-established guidelines that are used to steer information sharing. Guidelines should specify what kind of information gets shared, the process for sharing the information, and the timeliness of what gets communicated. Consistency in communication helps gain trust and credibility with those whom the church serves.

Identifying a communication advocate is the best way to ensure effective information sharing. This person should be responsible for thinking about **who** needs to know **what** information, **when** the information should be shared and **how** the information will be shared.

3. Incorporate Two-way Communication

Two-way communication is important because it helps to minimize misunderstandings and it helps to engage others. When people are allowed to ask clarifying questions, it helps to resolve issues and it opens the door for better understanding and buy-in.

This kind of communication can be done on a one-on-one basis, in large group open-forum settings, congregant focus groups or electronically via the website or other customer feedback tools.

It is important for processes to be developed to encourage two-way communication with the congregation, volunteers and employees.

Leadership is all about the **process** of leading others. This includes the way information is shared, how well others are communicated with, and how well the mission and vision is kept in front of the people.

Source: smartchurchmanagement.com
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