

Communications at New Creation

2023 Processes and Strategies

Some things to keep in mind while we share...

- No system is perfect.
- Church is about relationships.
- Discipleship is about movement.
- Communication is a ministry.

Core Strategies

- **6-3-1-1 Framework:** six-month event planning model to help your team start early and follow through
- **Communication Process:** intentional discussion oriented around goals and holistic messaging
- **Communication Tiers:** clarifies priorities and next steps for new and growing Christians
- **Communications Tools:** what we use to share the message
- **Additional Services:** Communications as Ministry

My dreams for Communications in 2023...

- As we all become more aware of these best practices and continue using them, we will see **more effective ministry** throughout our church.
- We will become better equipped to share the **GOOD NEWS** by **telling good stories**.

6-3-1-1 Planning Framework

The Five Ps... or Six Ps... or Seven Ps... of Project Management

Adopting 6-3-1-1

- What have we **missed** in the past?
 - Casting and repeating our vision often
 - Defining our goals early
 - Following up on our experiences
- **Effective** planning is essential to **effective** ministry.
- Avoid creating a ministry calendar through “copy & paste.”
- The **6-3-1-1 Framework** can apply to any church ministry (events, Bible study curriculum, groups, missions, etc.)

6-3-1-1 Framework

- **6 Months Before:** Cast vision and develop SMART Goals
- **3 Months Before:** Make major decisions begin the Communication Process
- **1 Month Before:** Activate Communication plan
- **Day Of:** Execute event plan and document
- **1 Month After:** Evaluate, Follow up, and Tell your story

6 Months Prior

- **Cast the vision.** What is this event? What will it look like?
- Begin answering the **Five Big Questions:**
 - Who are we serving?
 - Why are we serving them?
 - How are we serving them?
 - When will we serve them?
 - Where will we serve them?

6 Months Prior (continued)

- **Set** some SMART Goals.
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Attainable
 - Realistic
 - Time-bound
- **Identify** your cross-ministry partners (no ministry silos).

3 Months Prior

- **Review and restate** your vision and SMART goals.
- Major event details are **decided**
 - Budget is determined
 - Church calendar is confirmed
 - Venue and vendors are contracted
 - Recruit volunteers
- **Submit** your Communications Support Request

1 Month Prior

- **Activate** the Communication Plan.
- **Address** unanticipated issues.
- **Prepare** your hospitality.

Day of Event

- Welcome and greet
- Take attendance and take notice
- Build relationships
- Make disciples
- Document the story! Take pictures and video!

1 Month After

- **Tell** the story!
- **Evaluate** your plan and SMART goals.
- **Follow up** with guests with a thank you and an invite.
- After-action coaching or “muster”

Want a template?

- Download a 6-3-1-1 template from newcreationumc.org/communications soon!

Communications Process

Shifts in Communication Practices

Pre-COVID-19

- Put it in the Gateway.
- Everyone needs to know this is happening.
- My event is important.
- Messages are made at-will.
- Numbers matter.

Post-Pandemic

- What is most effective?
- Everyone needs to know what happened!
- The mission is important.
- Messages are intentional.
- Decisions and next steps matter.

FYI: Proactive Communications Actions

- **Communications Team** developed an 18-month Strategic Planning Calendar that includes most major church activities.
- **Communications Director** reaches out three (3) months prior to the event to begin the discussion if it hasn't started already.

Begin the Communication Process

1. **Communication Support Request:** gives the Director and Team an introduction to your message
2. **Communication Planning Meeting:** focuses on setting goals, designs, outlets and timelines by developing a Project Strategy Plan (PSP)

Submit a form or request a meeting at
newcreationumc.org/communications

The Communications Support Form

○ DEMO TIME!

The Project Strategy Plan (PSP)

- Defines the scope and timeline for creating the communication materials
- Establishes the approver for any deliverables
- Solidifies the messaging language for pre- and post-event

Components of the PSP

- Concept and Vision
- Audience and Message
- Technical and Event Production
- Channels and Strategy
- Responsibilities and Deliverables
- Priority Valuation

Reminders

- Anything used for communications should be reviewed by the Communications Team.
- Make sure you can include a budget for any materials.
- Give as many details as you can when you submit your support request.
- Make an appointment to develop a thorough Project Strategy Plan.

Tiered Communications

How would you describe our communications?

- The Silverware Drawer: everything belongs and is in its proper place
- The Sock Drawer: everything belongs, but is unorganized
- The Junk Drawer: all the everything, all the time

Potato Chip Decisions

- *Are we spending all of our time on potato chip decisions and wondering why we don't have any energy left for the good stuff?*
- When does more actually become less?
- When **everything** is important, **nothing** is important.

Principles of Tiered Communications

- Introduces intention to when, how, and why the church communicates
- Organizes and aligns messages with the church's mission and vision
- Provides clear next steps for visitors and members
- Establishes a hierarchy for all information that the church communicates

Results of Tiered Communications

- Top priority messages receive church-wide communication with greater emphasis.
- Other messages are communicated in an intentional manner but with less emphasis and/or to smaller, more targeted audiences
- Ministry areas think about their own communications strategies (and the Communications Team can help)

Priority Grid

	Tier One—Green	Tier Two—Blue	Tier Three—Gray
Connection	Mission CRITICAL	Mission SIGNIFICANT	Mission RELEVANT
Impact	High	Medium to high	Modest to medium
Scale	Large to extra large	Medium to large	Small to medium
Audience	Churchwide	Specific	Individuals
Resources	Maximum	Moderate	Minimal

Just a small example...

Tier One—Green	Tier Two—Blue	Tier Three—Gray
All-Church Day of Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Main feature in bulletin- Verbal announcement in Sunday services- Lobby display/sign-up- Promoted heavily on Facebook and signage	Adult Discipleship – New Season of Bible Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secondary feature in bulletin- Pre-service worship screens- Website- Facebook	Crafting Group <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Church calendar- Word of mouth
First-time Guest Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Main feature in bulletin- Verbal announcement in Sunday services- Resources in the Lobby	Outreach – Collecting Health Kit Supplies for UMCOR <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secondary feature in bulletin- Pre-service worship screens- Facebook- Service group text alert	HOGs Next Project <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Church calendar- Word of mouth- Service group text alert

Communication Tools

Now we get to the good stuff...

Some ideas to keep in mind...

- The church's most effective communication tool is the **personal invitation**.
- Information vs. **Transformation**: does this message encourage a decision or next step to follow Jesus?
- Sharing the **GOOD NEWS** always involves **telling a story**.

Learning how to use these tools...

- Is the tool naturally externally or internally focused?
- Is the tool one-way or two-way?

The Church Website

- The church's front door is focused on the needs of the first-time guest.
- Not an encyclopedia, but an engagement tool.

The Church Center App

- For church members and regular attendees
- Tracks attendance for worship and small groups
- Sign-ups for events and small groups
- Internal group communications

The Connection Newsletters

- For church members and regular attendees to “opt-in”
- Weekly electronic and monthly printed editions
- Will begin to reflect our tiered concepts more in 2023
- Have you considered a **ministry newsletter**?

Social Media

- Externally minded for engagement through likes, comments, and shares
- Your team should engage your own posts (at a minimum)

Featured Announcements

- Pre-service Screens
- Verbal announcements
- Video featurettes
- Exhibits and sign-ups in the Commons area
- Indoor digital signage

Connectional Communications

- Invitations to local churches
- Inclusion in the Coastal Virginia District newsletter
- Inclusion in the e-Advocate (VA Annual Conference newsletter)

Other possibilities?

- **Print**-ables (flyers, posters, invite cards, tri-folds, rack cards)
- **Mail**-ables (postcards, bulk letters, text alerts, listservs)
- **View**-ables (road sign, banners, church calendar)
- *Are we cap-able of something else? **Let's talk about it!***

Additional Services

Communications is a ministry...

Coaching

- Communications is a **ministry**, not just a *service*.
 - Bring focus and clarity to your message
 - Get creative with your message materials
 - Prepare to follow-up with your audience

Copyright Guidance

- There is **only one very specific exception** for religious organizations to use texts, music, videos, and other copyrighted works.
- Recent changes in copyright laws makes it easier for copyright holders to protect their rights and works.
- If you plan on using anything and you are unsure of how the church is covered, please contact the Communications Director.

Upcoming Technical Changes in 2023

- Office Xerox Printer Accounting
- **Digital First** approach to church printing
- End of Riso Printer Contract in August
 - Greater emphasis on early planning for the printed newsletters, bulletins, flyers, etc.
- Installation of indoor digital signage

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Questions?

- Email Jeremy.Crum@newcreationumc.org
- Make an appointment with my Calendly tool at calendly.com/ncumccomm
- Visit the website at newcreationumc.org/communications