

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Communication Basics Tripping Churches Up

Episode 84

3 Simple Concepts Your Ministry Needs to Be More Effective

Tony Morgan sees three common mistakes in churches when it comes to communication. As simple as they sound, when missing, they can unravel your overall ministry strategy. Are these communication basics tripping your church up? In this conversation, Tony interviews Phil Bowdle, author of [*Rethink Communication: A Playbook to Clarify and Communicate Everything in Your Church*](#), to unpack these communications basics often missing in churches.

1) A Defined Communications Strategy

- Churches tend to be reactive instead of proactive in their communication.
- When you don't have a strategy, you put more work on the people you're communicating to, instead of bearing the responsibility to clarify the message yourself.
- When you don't have a defined communications strategy, you inadvertently follow an old playbook: Blasting out "bullhorn" communication. Communicating like people are attending every single week, when they aren't. Communicating like we can only engage people when they walk inside the walls of our church, when we really need both physical and digital communication strategies to really reach people where they go.
- You don't need a 400-page manual—just some basic standards and expectations for how you communicate as a church.

Next Steps

1. What 1-2 things do you want to communicate to *everybody* who attends church each week? If you can limit it to that, you have the beginnings of a communications strategy.
2. Review your posture: Does your communication help people know what you want *for* them, or just what you want *from* them?

2) A System to Reduce Competing Messages

- Think about the experience of going to the mall to buy a pair of jeans: Somebody tries to spray you with cologne. Someone tries to get you to change your wireless carrier. There are ads everywhere.

You experience dozens of interruptions on your way to try to get the one thing you came for. It's overwhelming, and you tend to tune it all out.

- We can make the same mistake as churches: We assume if people are not attending or engaging, that they need more options—or that we need to talk louder or speak longer.
- The reality is that people engaging with our churches are not walking in thinking, “I need more things to do with my life.” They are looking for clarity, simplicity, meaning, and so on.
- We add more things to their plate. They just push their hands away from the table saying, “I don't have time for this. I don't know what to do.”

Next Steps

1. How can we make it clear to anyone who engages with our church what next steps we believe are important for them to take?
2. To reduce communication overload, what system do we need to create to simplify how we decide what gets communicated and what doesn't?

3) *A Content Strategy, Instead of a Promotion Strategy*

- Rather than communicating helpful content that will encourage people to take their next steps toward Christ, or telling stories about people's lives and spiritual journeys, most churches spend the majority of their communication effort on promotions.
- Rather than having a *promotion* strategy, you need to have more of a *content* strategy that helps you not only engage the people that are already connected to the church, but also opens the door for you to connect with people that are not in your church yet.
- The foundation of a content strategy is knowing who you're trying to reach and what their needs and values are. Then you can start developing content to address those needs/values and begin a relationship with somebody outside the walls of the church.
- Your mission field may look different than it used to—it may be on someone's phone. The average person is on social media 110 minutes a day. If you want to take advantage of some of the greatest opportunities we've ever had to communicate the Gospel, it will mean rethinking the role of the communications team in your ministry.

Next Steps

- Does our communications team have a seat at the table to help us be more strategic about how we do ministry, not just promote events and asks?
- How can we shift our announcements to not feel like announcements, but rather to communicate value and address felt needs?

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode84.