

Kem Meyer: [00:00](#) I don't see a lot of strategic leaders or pastors asking what is brand because they think they know what it is. And usually it'll fall into two big buckets. Either a spiritual leader will say, Oh, branding doesn't matter because we're here doing the real spiritual work. Or you've got a ministry leader who's jacked up about the communication channel and they reduce the branding to visuals or consistency. And neither one are true.

Intro: [00:30](#) Welcome to The 95 Podcast from the team at 95Network where we host conversations specifically to support leaders in small and mid sized churches.

Austin Savage: [00:42](#) Well, welcome to episode nine of the 95 podcast. My name's Austin Savage and I am here as always with Dale Sellers and we are your hosts. Dale, I think we've mentioned this on a previous podcast, but this is an exciting Fall for our team here at 95Network. We've got, I think seven pastors events planned in five different states this Fall. We just launched VisionDay a couple of weeks ago and it's just been a pretty exciting time around here.

Dale Sellers: [01:07](#) Yeah, well that's happening. And in the midst of that, we're writing a book too. And so while we had, we haven't been traveling as much. Uh, that's about to change, but we've also been getting a lot done throughout the summer as we prepare for what's coming. Uh, I'm really excited too that we're going to have the chance to go to the Dominican Republic in November and do our pastors conference. So, um, you and I both are kind of geeked out right now because we have a really good conference happening tomorrow and next Thursday. So we're, um, I'm really ready to roll, man. I got a lot to say.

Austin Savage: [01:36](#) Yeah, it's exciting. It's exciting. So, um, anyways, we're excited about this Fall, but we're also excited for our conversation today with Kem Meyer, who is the founder of Less Chaos. Less Noise., a really great organization that we partner with. Um, and we'll actually be talking about branding and what that means and why that matters for a church of any size. But don't forget, you can gain access to a bonus episode with Kem on how to improve your website without spending more money. It's a great conversation and you can gain access to that by becoming a 95Network member. All of our members gain access to bonus episodes of this podcast along with some other really great resources for pastors of small and mid sized churches. So if you're interested in that, you can go to [95network.org/membership](http://95network.org/membership). All right. Without further ado, Kem, it is so great to have you on the podcast. How you doing?

Kem Meyer: [02:31](#) So good, thanks Austin. Hi Dale.

Austin Savage: [02:34](#) Well that is great to hear. It's awesome to have you on the podcast. Dale and I were talking a little bit earlier and we're a little nervous to have both you and Dale on the podcast because just knowing both of your personalities, I think things could get pretty, pretty exciting on this podcast. It'll be fun.

Dale Sellers: [02:49](#) I'm excited about it. Well, my daughter Tiffany met Kem, I guess it's probably been five years ago. And even though I've never met Kem face to face, we have talked some, but my daughter said that she's the most incredible lady she's ever met and Kem has certainly backed that up. And so being able to work with her and with her husband Mark over the years. You guys are a great power couple. So I'm looking forward to hanging out with you today.

Austin Savage: [03:11](#) Yeah, well Kem, to start things off, It'd be great if you could tell us a little bit about your background on your story and then also about the work that you guys are doing at Less Chaos. Less Noise.

Kem Meyer: [03:21](#) Yeah. Uh, I am, I'm just like a career long communications person. I mean before, before I was even out of elementary school, I knew I want to have something to do with communications even though I didn't know what that meant, you know? So I spent about 15 years in the marketplace in corporate marketing and internet strategy working for ad agencies and um, global finance departments or global finance organization. Moody's financial corporation. And so it was a, I mean it was, it was all this stuff you would expect, right? Uh, journalism, graphic standards manuals, media relations, marketing. But also a big part of my job was software development and tech support. And I actually back in the day, I'm the one who designed pixel by pixel, the buttons on the toolbars for the software we were building. I programmed the demo discs and all kinds of stuff.

Kem Meyer: [04:19](#) So I have a lot of tech in my background too. Uh, so that, that's really fun. But about 15 years into my corporate career, um, I caught the vision for what would it look like to bring all that experience and then help my local church. So I jumped over and spent 12 years on staff team at my local church running IT and communications and spent several years on the executive team. And that was pretty rewarding. I got to be part of a church I loved and see it through growth seasons, see it in plateau seasons, see it in decline, see it in health, see it in dysfunction. And so kind of getting to see all sides of that. But the short

story, I mean, I guess the punchline of, of my, uh, my story is I wasn't, I didn't have any faith background. I had a great family, but I was pretty self-centered and cared for and shallow and, and really didn't think I needed anything.

Kem Meyer:

[05:17](#)

And I thought churches were for losers that couldn't make friends anywhere else. And like, that's fine, I don't need it. I mean, I just had a very, very messed up view of what churches were. I believed in God, what I knew of Him. I wasn't hostile of that, but churches just were like out of reach, out of touch, irrelevant. And I carried that into my adult years. And even when I tried to like ask questions and, uh, learn what makes a church valuable or why I would want to be part of it, I just, I experienced so many hurdles. So when then I actually experienced a uncommon and unexpected experience at a local church where I'm like, Whoa, Whoa, wait minute. This isn't what I thought. There's no barriers here. I understand this. I know how to connect this to my daily life. I know how to grow. I'm owning my journey in community.

Kem Meyer:

[06:08](#)

Then I started to grow passion and see the disconnects like in, in my field. I'm like, okay, there's all this hope and restoration and beauty and creativity and warmth that's inside the church, but nobody can see it because we're not putting our best foot forward. And so that's, that's really what I got to work with. Uh, just simplifying that, um, for churches. Right? And then for the past six years, I've just been merging those worlds. I have grandkids now that live in Milwaukee and I've got kids in college and Mark and I are, are, we're just in a different season of life where we can be more agile and move around. And so it's been nice now what I do at Less Chaos. Less Noise. is we just help mostly churches cause that's where my heartbeat is.

Kem Meyer:

[06:57](#)

Um, but there's a small section of businesses we help too because I wanna stay on the cutting edge of what's current. It's also part of my, my research for the church.. But we really just help churches simplify their communications so they can do a better job growing their reach. Um, they can stop losing people and they can stop wasting dollars. And we help by simplifying internal and external communications. Many times that's with messaging or with the communication systems. Uh, but almost everyone's lacking a strategy. Churches think that if they organize all their work around, they think their strategy is organizing the work. Yeah. Well the work is supposed to be organized around strategy. So that's where a lot of our, our time is spent. Um, or simplifying the activity, right? We just like, Oh, we can't keep up. We can't keep up. So let's add more. Let's add more. Why aren't people engaging?

Austin Savage: [07:50](#) Yeah. Yeah. Well, we've really loved partnering with you, I think for the past year. Uh, Kem, it's been really great to just kind of hear your heart as an organization and, um, just get to know you guys as you work with the churches to really help them put their best foot forward, as you said. And so, um, we really appreciate the work that you guys are doing to help churches.

Kem Meyer: [08:12](#) Likewise.

Austin Savage: [08:13](#) Thank you. Thank you. So Kim, today we wanted to talk about branding and so that I think that word, uh, even itself is kind of a little weird to hear, um, especially to some of our small church pastors. Like branding? Why are we talking about this? So, um, to just kind of bring our two worlds together, I guess here can, can we kind of define what a brand is? Um, but also why does that have anything to do with running a church? What does that look like?

Kem Meyer: [08:42](#) Yeah, it's, it's really funny and this is like so much of the work I do, branding, marketing, communications, uh, churches and businesses just use those words as synonyms, right? They just swap them, back and forth. Very much like, I see churches use the word ministry as a filler word. It's almost like the church version of "um" and they just drop it in there. Uh, and so we, we, we find these few buzzwords and when the, we use them for everything, but we're not actually understanding their definition or function. And the sad thing is like branding really is a key growth engine for your church. It can either fuel it or it can destroy it and it really starts with a good definition. So I'm glad you started with that. And what our branding is, what a church brand is. It's what makes you, you.

Kem Meyer: [09:38](#) It's, it's what makes you, you, it's what's distinct about you. So who you are, where you're going, what you're about, who you're serving, what is distinctive to you. But popular opinion is, oh, it's our visuals. Oh, it's our marketing and no, it all starts with the definition of who you are. Now that's where you start. And that's your aspirational brand, Austin. So let's start there. Or this is who we are, this is what we're about. Great. That's your aspirational brand. But we want to know what your real brand is? In reality, it's what people say about you and you're not around. And that's not my definition. Jeff Bezos is the one that coined that. And it's probably the best definition of branding I've ever heard. Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room. And so we can sit around all day and say, well, this is what we're about. This is what we're about. That's great. Is that what people say about you? And so

the idea is like, how do we line these two up to meet our mission and our vision?

Austin Savage:

[10:42](#)

Yeah. So let's talk a little bit deeper about that, Kem, because I love, I love that definition of what a brand is and I think that's really helpful in kind of shifting our perspective because when we say branding, we're not necessarily talking, you know, marketing, uh, or you know, whatever that looks like. But we're talking about really clarifying who you are as a church and making sure that people experience that aspiration that you have for your ministry. And so what does that look like, um, for us to, to really kind of one define this brand, uh, but also then pursue it, if that makes sense.

Kem Meyer:

[11:19](#)

Well, that's a good question too. And I'll tell you, I don't, I don't see a lot of, uh, strategic leaders or pastors asking what is brand. Yeah. Because they think they know what it is. And usually it'll fall into two big buckets. Either a spiritual leader will say, oh, branding doesn't matter because we're here doing the real spiritual work. Or you've got, um, a ministry leader who's jacked up about the communication channel and they reduce the branding to visuals or consistency. And neither one are true. They're both like, that's kind of the outside of it. So, um, but what I do, what I do see, when I run into churches that are trying to do better, they think, okay, if we want to grow or we want to pivot or we want to do a better job reaching our audience, they think we need a new brand.

Kem Meyer:

[12:10](#)

We need to fix our brand. We need a new brand. And I'll tell ya, Austin, nine times out of 10 churches do not need a new brand. Yeah. They need to live the brand they have better. Or they don't have a definition of who their brand is. Cause if you talk to every person in the church, they all have a different definition of who they are and what's important. So it really begins with clarity, right? Like let's answer these simple questions like what's most important about what we do? Like, what's the essential about what we do, what matters most, and who do we serve? If we start with that essential and make sure everybody understands that, then people can rally around that shared win and understand how their part plays into the bigger picture.

Kem Meyer:

[13:02](#)

Now, technically, what makes up a full brand, a fully functioning church or business or institution, it's all the answers to the questions like, okay, why are we here? Where are we going? How are we going to get there? What's our personality? Who are we serving? What matters to them? Um, all of those things are baked into a brand, but many times for any organization that's on multiple pages and it's in mechanical language, uh, I

worked with a church not too long ago that did a good job condensing the answer to all those questions on seven pages. And I know you've been through several strategic planning, uh, exercises and sometimes you may have, you know, 50 charts on the wall and different dashboards, all those things contribute, but all those things aren't carry-able. Right? And so I actually worked with an organization this year that had a 213-page strategic action plan.

Dale Sellers: [14:01](#)

Wow.

Kem Meyer: [14:03](#)

And there is good information in there, but how is that actionable? How do you carry that out? So if you want to start with your brand, like your question, like, so where do we start? How do we, well, the clarity is not how do we answer everything, but how do we just like what's most important about what we do and who are we serving first? Who's, who's our most important customer that's hurting the most? And let's get clarity around that and making sure everybody understands that.

Dale Sellers: [14:34](#)

So what if, uh, we either recognize that we don't have a brand. Or we recognize we need a new brand. Um, how do we fix that? You know, because most of the people we're speaking to today probably have limited resources. Uh, can you give us some steps of what we should do?

Kem Meyer: [14:50](#)

Well, it really starts with answering those questions, and Dale, how do you think most of the churches will answer that question? If I say what's most important about what you do and who are you serving? How, how are most of the churches you're working with answering those questions?

Dale Sellers: [15:05](#)

They're going to say that they're about, uh, the great commission and winning people to Jesus. But the reality is that they're pretty well much inward focused.

Kem Meyer: [15:13](#)

Right. And that's true. And it's also too vague. It's like, Oh yeah, we're about the great commission. You know, we're, we're about reaching out, reaching everyone and turning them into believers. Well before any of that happens, people are going to encounter you before they meet Jesus, before their life is transformed, before they become fully devoted followers. Whatever your mission statement may be, they meet you. So when they meet you, what are they meeting? And let's make sure we bring that into plain language and make it simple like, Oh, here's what we're about. Yes, we're about the great commission, but here's what matters to us. We care about

families, we will do anything for kids and that's what we're about or what we're really about is we just like dig into the Bible. Every time you come to our church, people are carrying Bibles.

Kem Meyer:

[16:06](#)

We study a lot, we have a ton of classes. That's our distinctive. Or we really, really care about our urban neighbors. And so we have a lot of, everywhere you look, you're gonna see us in the city. We're partnering with businesses, we're partnering with government officials, we're partnering with other not for profits because our church makes sure we contribute to solutions in our city. So every single church has to have something that is specific to them. And once you get clarity around that, that doesn't mean that's the only ministry you do. It means you start calibrating and making sure that you're not excluding what you say is most important. And you've got to weight things appropriately. So plain language matters, right? And we can't say we're about the great commission. Hey, I'm doing the Lord's work. That doesn't mean you're immune to the laws of gravity, physics, psychology.

Kem Meyer:

[17:06](#)

There's some basic laws of the universe that we have to meet if we want people to ever experience our bigger ideals. And uh, I, I spent several hours with one ministry leader and he got it in his head, but when he was trying to articulate, okay, what is our brand? What are we about? He kept taking it back up to this higher language, you know? Well, this is about, you know, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He felt like he was being dishonorable by not using these words. And I had to reframe it and said, I need you to get in touch just with the human side. And I just walked in your front door, you got 30 seconds with me. What's most important? What can you promise I'm gonna experience here? You have 30 seconds with me, what can I count on here? And so, uh, that helped him frame it differently and he's like, okay, okay.

Kem Meyer:

[18:01](#)

We, if we say we're friendly, we're a friendly church. Okay, now tell me, how is that, how are you friendly? And I just like lined up different personas. And how do you deliver that friendliness on your website? How do you deliver that friendliness at the info counter? How do you deliver that friendliness in the financial statements you send out or the info card. It's not friendly the first time we meet someone and we give them a guest card that asks them for the name and birth dates of all their kids, their mailing address, all their phone numbers. Yeah. That is not friendly. It's a little presumptuous. So we start running that through the filter and that's where we begin, Dale.

Like you don't have to have any resources. You just have to be honest with yourself and say, all right, this is who we are.

Kem Meyer:

[18:56](#)

Now let's start looking at how we're living that out. But the clarity begins with the senior leader. And if that senior leader can deliver clarity, either in a board room or from the pulpit, then other people can start to rally around it and solve problems. Okay, we say that you can count on us to be friendly or you can say we are about families. Or you can say we're about the city now, let's go solve those problems. And let's look at how do we do that in kids? How do we do that in missions? How do we do that on our website?

Dale Sellers:

[19:27](#)

Yeah. Let me go a step further because you basically said you kind of came from a finding Jesus kind of background. Uh, whereas versus me, I, I grew up in a traditional church, became a Christian at seven, been around the church my entire life. I've worked with thousands of churches and man, when I hear you talk, uh, what I see the conflict is, is that a lot of us are trying our best and our churches to be as religious as possible and not relational. And so there's, there's a lot of people you're speaking to right now, you just kinda hit them in the heart, but they don't know what to do with that because everything that they've designed is to be religious. And to have this, the way I describe it, when I grew up, it was like the church was supposed to be a, a place to go hide from the world. But what you're suggesting is, is what we actually should be, is a place where the world could, with the people out there can come hide from the world with us. Uh, so can you kind of go into the, um, you know, here you are, you're talking to pastor Dale who is just, everything we've done is trying to be religious and I'm not, and I'm not talking about un-Christian. I'm just saying our responses have always been, um, basically things that people can't relate to.

Kem Meyer:

[20:43](#)

Right. That's really, really good. Uh, and I'm not saying you replace it. I'm, it's both. We have, if we've got two arms, we've just been working out this left arm, you know, and we get this giant bicep and we get this anemic right arm because we can't have one without the other. Meaning even if we just follow the model of Jesus, he was both, but you can't be contagious. You can't grow disciples or help people see the relevance if you're not showing both sides. How does this religion connect to relationship? And if we're just building this little echo chamber where we all have this little secret language, uh, it makes us less, uh, connected to our neighbors. Just when we leave church, we become the weird neighbor. We become Ned Flanders. And it's just a, a little bit of a joke. And people may think, I mean, at best they'll be like, Oh, he's, he's kooky.

Kem Meyer: [21:37](#) Yeah, but we don't get invited to all the cookouts. Right? So let's just keep trying. I mean, we're all trying, right? And it's just we have, we, it's balancing that lean, uh, not leaning too far either way, uh, because if I'm just all relational but no substance, like sometimes we've got to get to some of the harder stuff. Some of the deeper stuff, some of the teaching stuff, but every single interaction is not a transaction from my church. Every single interaction is not a transaction. The other thing is every single, every single conversation is not a teaching platform. I don't need to be taught all the time. So there's, it's, there's multiple dynamics of the body of Christ and all the little interactions of your church. Sometimes it's teaching delivery, sometimes it's study delivery. Sometimes it's just communal, right? We're just hanging out and spending time with each other.

Kem Meyer: [22:32](#) Sometimes we're having fun. All of those are very religious activities, uh, because we're all pointing the same direction. Sometimes we're off road, sometime we're on the freeway, sometimes we're walking along time, sometimes we're speeding and that's, that's all. Okay. As long as we're kind of heading the same direction at our own pace, adding those dynamics. Because if we're just droning one dimensional teaching religion all the time, we take away, uh, people can't see themselves in the story. It becomes very manufacturing line. Uh, so all that to say, I mean, I'm a little bit going on a tangent, going back to branding, that religion is based in something, right? And you have church, you have chose your church family for a reason. Why did you choose it? You know, some people will say, because it did, it used to be about families. Uh, but all those families have grown up and now it's an, it's, it's an old person's church.

Kem Meyer: [23:25](#) I'm like, okay, so is this an old person's church or is it for families again? There's no wrong answer. Let's just be honest about what it is. Now let's make sure everything lines up about it. If you say you're for young people, but the only things that are available are things that make you come to the church. Um, and there's nothing that's interacting outside the church. It may be hard for young people to engage. I worked with a church recently. They were, so, they planted this church for this growing suburb that was all new families moving to the area. All these families had kids in the school and they're real active in sports and they said, we're here for this because we're in this major metropolitan area and everybody drives everywhere. They're in their car 40 or 50 minutes a day, one way, and they're even driving that furniture and we realize that people are losing their support systems, they're losing community and families are falling apart.

Kem Meyer: [24:24](#) And so we're going to do something different. We're going to get back to small. We're going to plan our church in a place where you drive to church, I mean where you live, not where you drive. We're going to be a church where you live, not a church where you drive. It's beautiful. And they started doing that, but then they were facing problems like, gosh, everybody in this community, they're sports obsessed. They're spending all their times at the school. So one of the first questions I asked, what are you doing to interact? And their answer was, well, that's their idols and we're trying to get them to change their idol.

Kem Meyer: [24:57](#) Someday that's what you hope. But the first thing they need to see is that you understand what they live. So let's brainstorm if that's what we're here for. How do we intersect? Right? So can we provide, ah, can we provide breakfast during tournament season? Can we provide a family meal during, uh, sectionals? Can we sponsor one of the refreshment stands at the football stadium? I mean, those little things, just being present in the things that are important to your community creates spaces for conversation. And it also just shows we, we are, we're smoking what we're selling. We say we're about families, we're about this city. And you know how we mean it? You're gonna see us everywhere. You're going to see us at the football games. You're going to, it doesn't mean we're making a football game our idol.

Austin Savage: [25:47](#) So, so Kem, it sounds like really our brand should influence every single thing that we do as a church. It influences, uh, the guest experience at our church and influences the way we talk, uh, on a Sunday morning. Um, it influences the events that we do in our community. It influences our website and like all of these things. Um, so how can we really start to kind of just look through that lens and kind of start to see everything through the lens of our brand?

Kem Meyer: [26:15](#) Right. Cause if I was guessing, anybody who was listening to this, even me, like before I like really dove in and I'd be like, okay, I get that concept, but my head is full of all the stuff we're doing and all the faces of the people that are going to push back when I try and change something. So you have to change the conversation. You've got to give them a new compass to calibrate to. So all of that stuff we just talked about, there's, there's a big portion of church leaders and ministry leaders that have documented who we are, where we're going, who we serve, how we're going to get there. They've documented all that stuff, but it's in that mechanical language, it's on multiple pages. So the first assignment, the first place to start start is

take all that, get it down to one page and put it in plain language.

- Kem Meyer: [26:57](#) That's your first exercise. Because if you can deliver that, then you can hand it off and everybody can start to know how to apply that. If I'm a web designer or if I'm a high school volunteer or if I'm the CFO, it doesn't matter. I can look at this and be like, okay, that's what's most important about what we do. I can see my part and I can go start solving problems and I can go start seeing where we're not delivering on that, but I need to have this cheat sheet very much like, like I'm so excited that football is happening right now. I mean I love football.
- Dale Sellers: [27:31](#) Amen. Amen. Amen. Go Tigers!
- Kem Meyer: [27:35](#) Yeah. I'm going to use an NFL metaphor I have. Have either of you seen an NFL playbook, like an NFL team playbook?
- Dale Sellers: [27:43](#) I've never held one in my hands, but I've seen them.
- Kem Meyer: [27:46](#) Yeah. Now they're like five inch ring binders and sometimes there's multiple volumes during training camp during practices during preseason, during weekly, uh, reviewing the previous week's game, you are devouring and studying these playbooks. The players, the coaches, the trainers, the advisors, the owners, they're devouring these playbooks. But during the game, nobody's referring to these playbooks. Nobody. They've got a shorthand in their head that they just keep going to. And if there's, if there's anybody who has anything, it's the quarterback back who might have a little cheat sheet on his wrist, just a couple of memory pegs that he goes back to. So he knows how to make the right call in each circumstance. We need that in our churches. What are the memory pegs we can anchor to so we can make the right call in circumstances? I'll give you one example. Um, I went to a church that had everything and I was taking my grandkids and uh, it was, it was hectic.
- Kem Meyer: [28:51](#) It was during the busy season, uh, busy service and on the surface everything looked great. Beautiful environment, up to date facility, current technology, great soundtrack playing in the background, high end coffee, like aroma going through, smiling faces, nice merchandise. Like everything's great. Uh, I have to stand in line to check these kids in. Long, long line. Uh, probably it felt like a half hour, but it probably was 10 minutes. Right? I get to the front of the line once I get to the front of the line and they say, Oh, you're in the wrong line, you need to stand in a different line. Well, how would I know that? Well, it was right

here. It was right on a little like printout that was taped to the front of the computer and all the crowds were covering that. Okay. The person at the, at the computer didn't know how to solve the problem, so they just said, wrong line.

- Kem Meyer: [29:47](#) I go, so I have to go stand in line again? They're like, yeah. Okay. So I go and stand in line again. The service starts and I get to the front of the line and the person at the kiosk doesn't know how to check in a new family. After I've just stood in two lines and they don't know how to check in a new family. So I'm waiting and waiting and waiting and, and I've got an 18 month old on my hip who is just getting more and more scared. She's never been checked in one of those stranger danger kids. And like, we're going to get her in this week, I'm going to get her in this week. And she's getting more and more anxious and the three year olds trying to break away and they couldn't get it to work. And, uh, again, services started. And I said, well, can I just have a sticker?
- Kem Meyer: [30:30](#) Can I just have, just give me a sticker with a code on it. It's okay if we don't get her entered. This is just about security. Well, are you sure? I mean, I'm just and this guy is looking for help. And uh, so he's not trained. Finally, uh, I see like a tag laying there and I just pick it up off the counter. I was like, I'm just gonna use this. He goes, I don't, I'm like, yeah, I'm just gonna use this. So I go downstairs to try and check in and I am, I'm being, first time she's been there, right. I go to the counter to hand her over and I said they couldn't get the tag to print, but I have a code here so you can take one. I can take one and we can figure out the technology later. And the woman said, no, I'm sorry. You're going to have to go back upstairs
- Kem Meyer: [31:12](#) And I was like, I've already stood in line. I'm missing service. And she said, I'm sorry. This is our policy.
- Austin Savage: [31:21](#) This is stressing me out.
- Kem Meyer: [31:21](#) So here's the thing, I looked at her and I said, if I go upstairs, I'm not coming back. She didn't know it wasn't my first time there. She didn't know that. I'm like also auditing this for communications. And this person was faithful. She was a devoted volunteer. She was a team leader. She was trained in the system and the policy, she didn't know how to think, "Absolutely. We're gonna, we're gonna help this mom get to service. We're gonna make sure this kid is safe. I'm going to take this tag and then I'm going to figure it out with my team."

- Kem Meyer: [31:58](#) She couldn't think in the moment she didn't have the memory pegs because everybody's guarding their own. This is my job. This is my job, this is my job. Get it on one page in plain language so people can interpret it and apply it. Whether they're checking in babies, whether they're at that kiosk. That's another thing. If I had that one page, I would put a different person on that kiosk. That person had a big smile. He was warm, he wanted to help, but he shouldn't have been using technology. These are the things that we we need to look at. So I would start there. Right?
- Austin Savage: [32:37](#) Yeah. So Kem, we talk a lot about Ephesians 4 here. Uh, when we're talking to our pastors about how the pastor's role is really to equip the people in the church. And so are you saying that by defining our brand, that's actually a way that we can equip our people?
- Kem Meyer: [32:53](#) 100% but I will also say you can help your pastor. I got to be part of a church with some of the best communicators and I learned so much even about effective communication from these communicators. But when I started there, we were a large church and we didn't have some of these things documented. And the last thing my pastors needed me to do was go to them and say, I need you to document this. I need you to fill this out for me. I need you to just tell me what to do. That's not what they needed. So I took a first stab at a draft and I'm like, I think this is, I think, did I get this right? Because everything I see everything, I hear all these little, all these little miscellaneous things, I've just kind of condensed it into this cheat sheet, this little, this little one page.
- Kem Meyer: [33:43](#) Did I get this right? And if I got the essentials right, then I know I can go solve problems on your behalf and so you can help your pastor that way. Just make sure, did I get the essentials? Cause if you can't paraphrase who you're about and where you're going and who you're serving, if you can't paraphrase that in plain language, you've got a problem. Yeah. You can't grow. People can't connect. They can't share it. They can't engage because it's just mechanical language that people look at and they're like, that's right. That's right. Amen. Then they go back to doing everything the way they were before. So yes you're equipping people, but this is two ways you can help your pastor too and you can be a volunteer. Take a stab at it. I've worked with lots of volunteers. We're like, okay, I'm going to take a stab and I'm going to be a champion.
- Kem Meyer: [34:31](#) I'm going to be a brand champion. I want my pastor, cause every pastor has got a different gift. They may be a shepherd,

they may be a teacher, they may be leadership development, let them do what only they can do. And then you become a force multiplier. And so I want to be a brand advocate. I don't have to define the brand and I don't need to make sure everything's consistent. I need to make sure everything's cohesive. We're a fam, we're multiple reflections of the same essence. It's my job to make sure I can like capture that essence on one page. Wow.

Dale Sellers: [35:07](#)

Well let me ask you quickly then, where does our logo and our website come in? I mean, don't we need that for our brand?

Kem Meyer: [35:12](#)

I'm so glad you asked that. It is important, right? It is important, but we, uh, first of all, your logo is just station identification is just a visual marker and people don't choose churches based on a logo. So take your time on your logo. It is not the first thing you need to do. Uh, now sometimes you can fix your logo as part of a bigger overhaul. You're bringing things into alignment. Let's bring it up to date because it actually is communicating something counter to who we are. But the logo alone should never be fixed on its own. It should be part of a total alignment and it's, it is a supporting player. I am sad to say, it's really sad when I see churches on a weekend announce we have a new brand and they show their logo to everybody in the weekend service. First of all, that's not weekend news. Yeah. And second of all, that's not your new logo. Um, I was part of one church that did that and everybody walked out of there. They still love their church, but they were kind of laughing about it and they were like, what?

Kem Meyer: [36:17](#)

So that just looked like a whole bunch of making it look like we're changing everything and we really changed nothing. And I mean people can see it. People are smart. So let's just put the logo in its right place. I mean, I'm, I'm, I'm all for a good logo. I'm a logo geek, but it is, it really is a minor function, especially in churches. And when it comes to your website, Dale, there are some beautiful, gorgeous, good looking websites that don't do anything. Yeah. And then there are some really, really ugly websites that function beautifully. And I'll tell you what makes a good website is one that works. So before you go and get a new website or pay somebody to design something new, just go and clean up the one you've got and make sure it works. Strip away a lot of the extras and all the, it's called Mirage content.

Kem Meyer: [37:13](#)

It's just a bunch of content that leads nowhere and doesn't do anything. It's all the salesy fluff people go to a website to get something done. So let's just make sure the simple stuff are there. Can I find, can I find your location and your contact

information? Is there an easy place for me to just look and see what the upcoming events are? Is there an easy place for, I don't need a page for every ministry, so let's just strip away. And also what matters about your website is who it's for. And really our website needs to be first designed for people who maybe have never been to our church before because they're going to visit our church on our website first before they visit our church in person. So let's just make sure the essentials are on there and let's make sure that we are living what we say is important to us.

Kem Meyer:

[38:00](#)

Um, here's a great example and I'm glad you asked this question. There was a super cool church I worked with that was in this community again, it was a bunch of people that lived in this little suburb because it was cheaper to live there. And then they all drove into the city to work and then they came back to their little community because they could afford to live there. So there was no community in their little city because they all worked out of town. They came home, they're tired and this, this church was so neat cause they saw the need and they're like, there's just no place to rest. People don't know each other. Uh, they need warm, familiar space. And we're going to, we're creating that bond. We just, we don't, we're not asking them for anything. We're going to slow it down because not, not the content, just the pace of life, because everybody in their community just was at the speed of light.

Kem Meyer:

[38:52](#)

And so like we need to provide a place of refuge. We're not, we don't want anything from you. We're not going to push you into anything. We're not gonna ask you for anything. Take your time, come and be known. Take your time getting to know us. This is a place where everybody's welcome, but the first thing they hit everybody with is membership class. And you're not allowed to do anything else unless you become a member. And I'm like, this is incongruent. Like you said, that you're having problems attracting new families in your community. You said you're warm and welcoming and friendly, and you want to create a place where everybody's welcome. The first thing you see is membership class. But I can't, I can't do anything else. Well, once I pressed them, they had a really, really good reason for it. Like you can volunteer everywhere.

Kem Meyer:

[39:38](#)

We don't need you to come and volunteer. We want you to know we're here to serve you. This is a place where we're going to take time. You can take time and if you want to be part of the mission, great. Join a membership class and then be part of the volunteers. I'm like, that's actually quite beautiful, but we need to reorder what you lead with. Cause I'm a new guest here.

There is nothing in this bulletin for me to take a next step on other than come next week. So it was just, they weren't doing anything wrong. They had just ordered their content upside down. They had just put desserts first maybe, which yeah, that may not be wrong. So they really didn't do anything wrong. They just needed to rearrange some stuff.

Kem Meyer:

[40:27](#)

And that goes to your website, Dale. Like let's just make sure we answer the basic questions first. Yeah. Uh, and we just cleaned ourselves up a little bit. Right? Um, so there is a place for that, but it will not fix it. And we can have our website just like smoking. It can be great. And then somebody visits us and it all falls apart. Yeah. Yeah. And so it's more important that we're prepared for guests or for just people. I mean, that church I told you about, I attended that church and when I left I wasn't like, I'm never going to this church again. I'm so mad. I mean, I was already invested. Right? Like I loved that church. I love those people. I'm bested. But you know what it did do, I will think long and hard before I invite parents, um, of other families and if I do invite them, I will have a precursor like, Hey, listen, it's a little bit of ordeal. You're going to want to show up early. There's going to be a line. And so I wasn't mad or hostile. I didn't walk out and never come again. I was already in. But it, it greatly handicapped my ability to tell my neighbors or want to champion. I'm like, nah, it's a lot easier to go to the church down the road. Well, they might not have as many options for your kids. It's just less of a traumatic experience on Sunday.

Austin Savage:

[41:49](#)

Yeah. Yeah. So Kem, we like to end a lot of these conversations just with one last question for you. Um, I know that you work with a lot of different churches and you've worked with quite a few small churches and so I think that there's quite a few pastors listening who want to kind of address this area of their ministry. Um, but maybe they just feel like they don't even have the time to even think about this or like, just all these different things that are going through their head. So what's just one last word of encouragement or support that you would like to leave with the pastors who are listening to this podcast?

Kem Meyer:

[42:20](#)

Well, I'm going to say what they're probably thinking. They're like, Kem, that's all great. This seems like real simple, real simple. You're telling me that I can help my church growth just by getting all this stuff on one page. That sounds a little too good to be true. And while it's really not too good to be true. It is simple. It may not be easy. I will work with lots of churches and businesses. We will do that work. We will get everything on one page and everybody feels really excited about that. That's step one. Now we go to live that out. Well, let's just, how do

you live it out? Well, if this is your compass, let's calibrate your bullets into it. Let's make sure the information on your bulletin is organized for the people you want to be there, not the people who are already there.

Kem Meyer: [43:07](#)

Let's make sure you're prioritizing the priorities. So the minute we start talking about reorganizing information or redirecting or taking some stuff out of the bulletin or getting rid of the ministry pages on the website, that's when the wheels come off the bus and they say, Nope, no, I can't do it. Uh, because they're, they're so stuck in the way that they are doing church that they forget why the church is there or they're just, they need help. Uh, they need help convincing the people that are used to the way things are being done. So my, my word of encouragement is, is this one, many, many, many times if you get it down to that one page, you can change the conversation with some of your toughest critics, the people that are most comfortable because then it, you stop arguing about preferences and what was, and you start looking at this one page document, you're like, well, wait a minute.

Kem Meyer: [44:06](#)

And you turn back to these ministry leaders, or these elders, or these volunteers, or these donors, and you say, guys, we say we're about families. I need you to help me go look and see where are we really helping families and where are we hindering? Let's, let's and, and make them part of the solution, not where you start tackling the tactics, but you actually send them out and say, where are you seeing us do a disservice to our families. I'm just using that one as an example. Right? Uh, let's make sure that what we want to be true is actually true. Let's hold ourselves accountable. Are people using what we offer, the way, the way we intend them to, because our good intentions is not what we need to measure ourselves by. We need to measure ourselves by is it working? So let's ask ourselves these questions.

Kem Meyer: [45:01](#)

Who is this for? How are they using it and what do we want to happen because they've used it. Let's look at that. If that's not working, then you're going to ask these people what could we do different? And I've watched simple things happen because of this brand cue card. One church had done a church cookbook for like 50 years, which those things are the jam. I remember back in the day, I did not go to a church and I looked for the annual cookbook sale because that's where you get the great recipe, right? But that was before Pinterest and recipe.com. But this church was still doing this cookbook and for years you've got these new people come into the church, new staff members

and they're saying, we don't need this anymore. And you've got the old timers and the founders saying we've always done this.

Kem Meyer: [45:49](#) And for years they're arguing about it. They draft this one page, this brand cue card that that we're talking about. Uh, or sometimes I just have to call it a church cue card because sometimes passengers will short out cause they don't, they think brand is marketing and we're not even there yet. So let's just call it your church cue card. That whole conversation changed. The ministry leader sat down with the new staff people that had been arguing that you shouldn't have that cookbook anymore. And they said, no, wait a minute, why was this? Why did we start doing this cookbook in the first place? We wanted to be at the table with families. We wanted to be in the community, we wanted to support the sacred time in the kitchen and dining room. And so how are people doing that today? Well lets do disposable shopping bags.

Kem Meyer: [46:36](#) That seems to be a big thing right now. People are eco-conscious and they're shopping and so they cut so much. Expenditures provided so much more value. They unified like this arguing on the inside of the church unified all because the conversation changed around this one pager and I'll, I'll tell you just to get started. I've, um, I put together something for you guys. It's just like a little coffee talk where you kind of practice answering these questions to get it down to one page. Uh, and you can share that link in the show notes and if a, if a church leader will take the time to do the work and actually fill that in, we'll jump on a call.

Austin Savage: [47:21](#) Awesome. I love it. Well, Kem, uh, on top of the coffee talk that you're providing for each of our listeners, which is awesome. What's the way for church leaders to see what you're doing and get in touch with you?

Kem Meyer: [47:32](#) Oh, well they can get on lesschaoslessnoise.com Or I'm just on, I'm Kem Meyer on Twitter. Yeah. But uh, it's pretty easy to find. I'm not hard to find. Kem Meyer and Less Chaos. Less Noise. I'm everywhere.

Dale Sellers: [47:50](#) But It's K E M and not K. I. M.

Kem Meyer: [47:53](#) That is correct. I am a typo in communications.

Austin Savage: [48:02](#) That's awesome. Kem, this has been a really great conversation and I feel like the time has flown by so it kind of, I'm bummed out that we can't talk about this forever, but thank you for just

taking some of your time to really help us shift our perspective around really developing a brand and why that matters and so thank you so much Kem for talking to us today.

Kem Meyer: [48:21](#)

Yeah, this was fun. This was fun guys.

Austin Savage: [48:23](#)

Okay, well thanks for listening to episode nine of the 95 podcast. We hope you enjoyed this conversation. Kem has given us some great resources that we've linked to in the podcast show notes including the coffee talk that she mentioned, which is a great resource for you as you start to develop this brand cue card that she was highlighting throughout the conversation. So definitely check out the links in our show notes. There's some great resources there that she's provided. As always, don't forget to catch the bonus episode with Kem on improving your website without spending more money. You can get access to that as a 95 network member. It's a great resource, a great conversation. And finally, if you enjoyed this conversation, we just ask that you would subscribe to the podcast so that you don't miss a future episode. Next week we'll be back with a conversation with Mark and Jill Savage, who have an incredible story of redemption in their marriage and especially some ideas on how to balance ministry and marriage. So definitely be looking out for that conversation next week.