**7 Church Marketing Ideas to Retain and Attract Members**

**By Izaak Crook**

Think that marketing is just a polite way of describing pushy advertising? Think again! Marketing is for far more than selling sauna suits and ab-exercisers. In fact, it can be the difference between dwindling attendances and a thriving church community. Here are six of the best strategies that you can use to boost church membership!

1. Start with Facebook, and go from there

You can’t get away with not having a social media presence these days, whether you set up accounts for a community organisation, a business, or just for yourself. This applies to churches too. Communicating with church members and keeping people updated with the latest news are both easier than ever with social media.

Facebook is a great place to start. You can invite people to events, and talk one to one or through group chats. And there simply isn’t an easier way to get your message in front of as many people as possible as with a Facebook post. Tapping into this potential is probably the best first step you can take, and once you’re comfortable with social media, you can always expand to other platforms like Twitter and Instagram.

2. Don’t stop at Sunday service

There’s no use thinking of marketing strategies if you’ve nothing to market. That’s why it’s always a great idea to run small events outside of regular Sunday service. And if you have the room, to run big events as well. Of course, this could be anything that your local community has an interest in. The point is to really attract people outside of those hours to build a community around your church.

Running events, both regularly each week and on a one-off basis, gives you the opportunity to put your church in front of an audience. If all you have to advertise are regular services, that’s just not eye-catching enough to hook and reel in potential new members. But even with just basic events like car boot sales and games clubs, you can keep people’s interest- it’s a simple case of keeping things interesting!

3. Don’t give up on traditional advertising

At the same time, there’s no need to give up on traditional advertising. Facebook is an excellent way of attracting new, and most often younger, members. But older members of the community aren’t as easy to target through social media. That’s where traditional ‘advertising’ comes in.

One awesome way of reaching this older group is through ad space in local newspapers. Advertising events like jumble sales or afternoon teas through the local news will help boost attendances. Make sure to combine your strategies by posting about events like these on social media, so that you attract attendees of all ages.

4. Write newsletters to keep members engaged

Once you’ve started to attract more members of the community to events and Sunday services, that’s not where your efforts should end. You have to make sure to keep them engaged, keep them coming back, and keep them interested in what you’re doing. A great way of keeping hold of members’ attention is through a good old-fashioned newsletter!

Of course, your newsletter should mostly be about news and upcoming events. But you can keep it light with puzzles, pub quiz questions and crosswords, too. Hand them out to attendees of Sunday service, and pin them up on notice boards around town. Again, this traditional strategy should help to retain older members who prefer newspapers and newsletters over social media.

5. Don’t underestimate the power of word of mouth

Word of mouth advertising is an oldie, but it’s a goodie. Posting about events on social media, and advertising through traditional routes like newspapers and newsletters is effective. But even more effective is to hear from a friend, neighbour or colleague about how much fun they had at the last service or group meetup.

You can even go one step further. Each week, why not ask present members to talk to friends and family, and encourage them to come along? Attracting new faces isn’t about bringing in twenty, fifty or a hundred each week. Remember that slow and steady wins the race, and consistent efforts- like encouraging word of mouth- can sometimes prove to be the most effective.

6. Post news of your events on Meetup

This is another strategy to attract a younger audience. If you’ve never heard of Meetup, and can’t guess from the name what it is, it’s a popular site where users can create groups related to particular interests. It’s full of hiking groups, book clubs and similar. There’s a Meetup app, too.

There are plenty of community organisations that advertise on Meetup to give members the lowdown on up and coming events. But more importantly, you’re going to be getting putting church events out there in front of a fresh audience. The key to success is to achieve a balance between attracting these new members with social media and apps like Meetup- and maybe your own app, too- and retaining members using traditional methods like newsletters.

7. Create your own mobile app

So, you’ve set up everything from regular events to social media profiles on every platform you can think of. What’s next? Well, why don’t you complete the picture with your very own mobile app? A church app is a great way to give churchgoers the chance to sign up to events, see what’s happening, and get alerts through push notifications.

Believe it or not, you don’t have to hire a designer at a cost of tens of thousands of pounds to get your very own top-quality, personalised app. You can actually design your own using our custom drag and drop editor. And the best part? It’s all for free. So why not give it a go?

The above article, “7 Church Marketing Ideas to Retain and Attract Members,” was written by Izaak Crook.

The material is copyrighted and should not be reprinted under any other name or author. However, this material may be freely used for personal study or research purposes.

This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”