

Using Creativity to Communicate

discuss different ways to be creative, what it may look like,
how to generate ideas.

how to keep your creative ideas (and team) consistent across all of your communications.

how to start and lead a creativity team in your church or ministry.

resources on how to plan for creativity

1) be aware of your surroundings

- a. pay attention wherever you are to **how things are conveyed**, you will find me at the mall looking at a particular sign, studying billboards, reading copy text of a magazine.
- c. allow yourself to "**see**" **past the superficial** and really get a feel for what is being communicated
- d. pay attention to **more than visual**, allow yourself to get a sense of spatial arrangement, tone, atmosphere, sounds, attitude.
- e. **soak in the experience**- pay attention for what experience you are receiving from a place

2) Be on the lookout - not to copy but to be inspired

- a. **the easy way out is to copy** - its one thing to be inspired it is another to rip off
- b. **good ideas can come from churches, but don't just look at what other churches are doing.** if we agree that most churches are behind the times with reaching culture this is already a dead strategy
- c. pay attention to **events that are happening in your community**, at bars, clubs, ymca, citywide etc...
- d. **take some cues from pop culture** - be mindful for

illustrations from shows like survivor, or from movies you like. Overarching themes and concepts from these shows are what people are currently relating to.

- e. **Don't steal.** You as pastors need to be aware that if you use an image that you don't have the copyright or usage right to, then you're opening up the door to potential lawsuit.
 - 1. It's not legal
 - 2. It's not ethical
 - 3. It's not creative
 - 4. Non-profits are not protected.
 - 5. I have a hard time believing that God can honor that.
 - 6. fair use only applies if you are actually teaching about a specific design
- f. There are resources online that are free that extend limited usage rights. There are also very economical resources.

3) Create an idea file

- a. I have a physical file that I have built up over time with print ads that I am very inspired by. from time to time I peruse looking for innovation.
- b. I also have a very large digital file that I keep (several gigs worth) of images, website, typography etc... that I find to be great design.

4) Good ideas are generated in a crock pot and not a microwave

- a. allow yourself time to "simmer" your ideas. even if we have a great idea that seems like we could pull it off right away, sometimes when we are patient and wait, that idea

builds and snowballs into an even greater idea.

5) Good ideas come with risk.

- a. **do something that challenges you.** set your mind on doing the one thing you have always wanted to do and do it.
 1. **from a design perspective.** sometimes I bite off more than I can chew. I give myself a project or a design that I really want to do, but I don't know how to do it and I learn as I go
 2. **from a writers perspective**
 - a. challenge yourself to write frequently, set yourself some goals that you don't think you will hit. Ex. John Grisham 2 pages per day.

6) If your coming up with all the "best" ideas your doing it wrong.

- a. **teamwork and collaborative brainstorming is essential for healthy ministry.** you must learn to trust your team and open yourself up for critique and review.
- b. in order to work well with a team,
 1. **you must become a planner.** stop trying to do everything yourself. make a goal to get at least 6 months out.
 - a. this show honor and respect for your team
 2. **you must be a communicator.** to work with a team well you have to learn how to communicate to a team learn to express your thoughts, don't expect them to read your mind. communicate meeting times and agenda's in advance its ok to vocalize frustration. don't be the pastor that has it all together all the time.

3. **you must be a listener.** you don't know it all. be humble and learn from your team. you would be surprised how much insight and creativity you could find if you reach beyond the pastoral staff. People have been placed in your ministry for a reason
4. **learn how to say no the right way.** there is nothing more discouraging to a creative person than a wet-blanket thrower.
5. **enjoy your team.** hang out with them outside of meetings.
 - a. Build in fun time in your meetings - perry noble
 - b. Plan to get out of the office and have fun

Try New Things:

- Read books you normally wouldn't read. Read a lot of magazines. (HD Biketown)
- Compete with someone else on how creative you can be on a given task.

7) Here is a radical thought: PRAY

- a. **pray.** sometimes we get too dependent on sermon central, powerpointsermons.com and sermonspice to come up with our message ideas for us.
- b. **we live in a culture where ideas are easy to share and find.** this leads to a lot plagiarism. I think it also stymies god's ability to speak to a pastors heart.

If you are struggling with coming up with original concept:

- a. break from tradition.** notice your weekly pattern and change things up, if you normally work at the office, work at a coffee shop, if you normally work at a coffee shop, work from home. sometimes breaking our routines is necessary to break out borders
- b. draw what you are thinking.** pastors tend to be wordsmiths. break the trend. scribble, doodle it out.
- c. take some time off** - sometimes an indicator that you are overworked is lack of creativity
- d. get the thoughts out of your head and onto paper** – sometimes other things can crowd out original ideas. take some time to update that to do list, and accomplish a few tasks.
- e. pray.** there's that radical concept again.

DO LESS!!!!!!!

It is easier for you and your team to **plan less, but plan it right.**

- a. message themes** - (a lot less taxing on your creative staff) and you really only have to come up with 10-12 per year at the most
- b. only run several events per year, but do them right**
- c. pare down your ministries.** determine what you are doing that is effective and do just those things. not every church has to be great at reaching everybody.
 - 1. rush church. music, children, health. if anything falls

out of that they don't do it. no men's ministry, no women's ministry. no knitting ministries or stubbed toe ministries.

4. craig groeschel of lifechurch.tv met a pastor of a church who was bragging about have 187 different ministries, yet this year their church shrank in size, just like they did last year and the year before that.

How to keep your creative ideas consistent across all your communications

Consistent communication is a very big key to effective branding:

- 1) Ask the right questions up front before you start the "look" of what you are doing

Who: Who is the event for? Who is your target audience? Who should attend your event? They may not know who the target audience is, but they usually have a rough idea who they want to reach or who they want to come.

What: What is the event? This is the description of the event. There need to be two different versions; a long one (three to four sentences) and a short one (once sentence or less). It doesn't sound like much, but that's how short attention spans are.

When: When is the event? Dates and times are important, as is the day of the week. It's less brain damage for people to see a day of the week. Many times they won't recognize a date, but that day of the week

might ring a bell for the person reading.

Where: Where is the event? Some physicists say that time and space are linked (you never mention a place without a time, or a time without a place).

Why: Why should someone attend your event? Why are you doing the event (purpose/vision/win)? This information is essential to us (designers). We need to know why the target audience is supposed to be attending this event. It's useful for copy writing, headlines and even visuals. Knowing what the end result should be will allow us to create effective visuals that actually complement the event; more than just a pretty picture

How: How should the reader respond? How do they act on what they've read? This is the money question. This is the action step on the purpose of the event. Does the reader need to register for the event? How do they do it (paper/web/email)? This also encompasses more subtle responses. How should the reader respond emotionally? How should they feel after viewing this ad?

- 2) Font selection (limit this to no more than 2 per design)
 - a. Maybe a 3rd for an easy to read body text)
- 3) Color (keep the color EXACT across all mediums)
 - a. you would be amazed at how this aids in memory
- 4) Similar imagery/photographic styles
- 5) Similar design elements
- 6) Consistent writing style
 - a. tone, voice, the actual words used

7) Work the headlines

8) Frequency Don't just mention things once and hope they remember.

9) brand manager

**If it isn't consistent or you can't do it well...don't do it until you can!
Work smaller and don't try to overextend yourself. Never despise
small beginnings.**

power point

verbal

word of mouth

facebook

twitter

myspace

bulletin

postcard

letter

email blast

phone tree

website

posters

video commercials

banners

signage

table tents

sms

television commercials

billboards

print ads

How to build and lead a creative Team:

Start somewhere: it is better to have a small creative team then to do it all yourself.

Find Balance in the team. Be very careful who you add to this team. Match Personalities. Dreamers balanced with doers. Be sure to throw in a few skeptics too. Be sure to balance ages/experiences. Lean toward who you want your target demographic to be. (ex. VCC reaching young adults)

Trust Your Team. Allow them to plan things fully. Learn how to have a hands of approach. This will give them freedom.

Recognize solid effort. Be sure to thank them publicly. Reward your team. Without them knowing about it. It shows value.

Invest in your creatives. Ex. Rush church. Put your money where your mouth is. Period. If you want to have great video and you buy a \$200 over the counter video camera guess what you'r not going to have....great video.

If you don't have people present who are skilled, find people who are initiators and have a desire. You can send them to school. Help co-pay

for their education. Work out hours worked at church for trade for sending them to school for what they want to do.

Compete. Split your team. Have them compete to see who can do better.

Brainstorming:

Do it with purpose before you leave create a plan of action to accomplish the tasks you just came up with.

Don't be vague. Have individuals own action steps.

If you are project leader and you delegate keep the individuals tasks on your to do list until they are done. Ultimately you are responsible for it.

Action Oriented Culture

Foster and action oriented culture. Ensures creativity is capitalized on and not squandered.

Aesthetics of tools/workspace:

The aesthetics of tools you use to make ideas happen is important b/c it does cause you to work more efficiently and generate ideas more easily. It is the substance of style.

Attractive things just work better....because we work better with attractive things.

This is why creatives prefer macs. Yes a pc can do everything a mac can do but macs are undeniably prettier. You WANT to use it.