

HIGHER THINKING

SUMMER 2017

# outcomes

The Magazine of Christian Leadership Alliance

## Purposeful Connections

Prison Fellowship's  
*James Ackerman*  
offers a CEO's perspective.



## Top 5 Digital Strategies

Trends you  
can't ignore

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**Connecting in a  
Distracted Age**  
Communications priorities  
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## Transformational Connections

**YOU WERE CALLED INTO CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP.** You have a heart to reach our world for Christ. And, you are laboring to that end every day.

Here at Christian Leadership Alliance, we want to equip you for that work and connect you with other Christian leaders as you seek to transform the world for Christ.

Ultimately, the Spirit-inspired work you do is about making transformational connections with others. Whether sharing the gospel or meeting felt physical needs of the hurting and hungry in today's world, you must meaningfully connect with the hearts and minds of those you reach and serve.

Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus continually made such transformational connections. He touched the hurting and sick, offering them healing and wholeness. He communicated timeless wisdom to his disciples. He spoke words of challenge and truth to religious authorities. He clearly articulated his redemptive mission for all generations. And ultimately, he called those of us who have put our faith in him as Savior and Lord to connect with others to advance the gospel:

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matt. 28: 19–20).

This edition of *Outcomes* offers insights on maximizing the use of today's technology to make transformational connections with those you're called to serve.

*W. Scott Brown*

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**8 CONTENT THEMES** Executive Leadership • Resource Development • Financial Management • Board Governance • People Management and Care • Marketing and Communications • Internet and Technology • Legal and Tax

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The purpose of *Outcomes* is to fulfill Christian Leadership Alliance's mission to equip and unite leaders to transform the world for Christ. *Outcomes* offers those whom Christ calls to leadership higher thinking and lifelong learning resources to equip them for excellence in kingdom service and stewardship.

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# Purposeful Connections

Prison Fellowship's James Ackerman offers a CEO's perspective.

CLA PRESIDENT AND CEO TAMI HEIM recently interviewed Prison Fellowship President and CEO James Ackerman. Prison Fellowship seeks to restore hope and share God's redeeming grace with prisoners and their families around the world.

Prior to becoming Prison Fellowship's president and CEO in 2016, Ackerman was a seasoned executive with more than 20 years of experience leading advanced media companies. He helped media companies like Documentary Channel, British Interactive Broadcasting, Broadway Systems, and Open TV navigate periods of transition and growth. In 2005, he founded Spinnaker Media to develop innovative entertainment and digital media companies. He also previously held roles at British Sky Broadcasting, A&E Television Networks, Hearst Entertainment, International Family Entertainment, and Grey Entertainment & Media.

He has long had a heart for Prison Fellowship's work. Since his first visit to a prison, a 2004 tour of a Prison Fellowship faith-based unit, he has been a faithful prison ministry volunteer. He and his wife Martha have also coordinated Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program at their church, creating pathways for incarcerated parents to restore and strengthen relationships with their children and families.

Ackerman is a member of the second graduating class of the Colson Center's Centurions program, now called the Colson Fellows program, and was personally mentored by Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson. He is a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard. He and his wife Martha have two adult children and reside in Washington, D.C.

## How has your background as a media executive influenced your leadership of Prison Fellowship?

I know how to lead the only way that I have led, which is as a business leader. My approach at Prison Fellowship has been very growth oriented, matching the ministry work we have to do with the revenue opportunities to support it.

## When did you feel God was calling you from your business career into nonprofit leadership?

In 2015, I was serving as executive chairman of a media technology company called Broadway Systems, which we sold to a much larger global competitor. After I transitioned out, I began a discernment process for what was next. I then learned that the leadership role at Prison Fellowship had opened.

By that time, I had been serving as a prison volunteer through Prison Fellowship for nearly 12 years. I said to my wife Martha: "I have so much passion for what Prison Fellowship does. Do you mind if I throw my hat in the ring?" She agreed. I did, and seven months later the board invited me to take up the leadership of Prison Fellowship.

## What was your original heart connection with Prison Fellowship?

In 2004, as CEO of a NASDAQ listed company, I had gotten to a point where work was my entire life. It was affecting our marriage. It was impacting my role as a father. I had no involvement in my community. It was affecting all of my relationships.

So, my wife sent my son and me to a father/son retreat at Mount Hermon, a Christian retreat center in the Santa Cruz Mountains. As God would have it — and I'm a big believer in divine appointments — our cabin mates were Dick Paulson and his son Joseph. At the time Dick was the West Coast development director for Prison Fellowship.

Dick shared the work of Prison Fellowship. I told him I had always had a fascination with prison ministry work, and that I had been in a couple of churches with big prison ministries, but had never done anything about it. Dick said, "Well, I can fix that. Let me take you to prison."

He did. I visited one of Prison Fellowship's yearlong intensive programs. It was its own unit in that prison, referred to by others as the "God Pod." The men in the God Pod were opening the door for each other. They were praying for each other. The unit was clean. It was orderly. People weren't speaking in loud voices. It was peaceful. It's not what I expected to see in a prison.

Later the warden took us on a tour of the whole prison. We went through the general population unit immediately next door to the "God Pod." It was exactly what I expected a prison to be. Everyone had their game face on. People were separated by gang affiliation. The place smelled horrible. Everybody was cursing. It felt like it could erupt at any moment.

When I got back home I told Martha, "I just can't wait to get back into prison." A month or so later, God opened the door for me to start counseling a guy on death row in San Quentin. Later when we moved to Nashville, Tenn., I started teaching a life skills class for men coming up for parole consideration in Riverbend Maximum Security. I dove into prison counseling and ministry work.

## Isn't it amazing how God had all of that so preordered for you?

Yes, the field team at Prison Fellowship loves it. That's where my heart is. You can't keep me out of visiting prisons. Once we flew down to Norfolk, Va., to meet with donors and visit a prison. It had been raining there for about eight consecutive days. It took us four attempts to get to the prison because of flooding. I turned to the group as I was driving, and said: "Have there ever been five people more desperate to get into a prison than the five of us?" I just love it.

An odd thing that happens to me when I walk into a prison: I just kind of come alive. I have the sort of

euphoric feeling one has when walking into a resort on the first day of vacation: “Ah, the pool, the beach, the sunset.” It’s not quite that, but it’s close. I walk in and feel like I’m at home.

**It’s beautiful how God prepared you for this role. With your media background, what advice would you share on capitalizing on today’s media opportunities?**

Recently we’ve created a video series called *Prison Fellowship Insider*, which we distribute on social media, preliminarily through Facebook and Twitter.

It’s very popular among our followers and gives them a real sense of what we do. It includes testimonies from people who have been through our programs. When we have the opportunity to take cameras into prison, it literally takes you in to see what we do.

We try to connect with people through all forms of media, whether print, digital, social media, etc., because we think it’s extremely important to tell our story and help people understand our needs, opportunities, new victories and more.

Because I come from a media background, we’ve been able to do some cool things. We held a private screening in San Francisco for an HBO film called *Solitary* about two weeks before the film premiered. We had 78 people in a 100-person theater: academics, donors, wardens from our warden exchange program, foundations and other individuals involved in the criminal justice system. We invited local pastors too. At the end, almost everybody hung out for an hour just to get to know each other and make connections.

**As the new CEO at Prison Fellowship, how have you communicated your vision?**

I’m a big believer in communicating clearly and often. On my first day here at Prison Fellowship, I addressed all staff. I said, “I’m going to talk for 20 to 25 minutes, give some background on our journey, how my wife Martha and I got here, and then I’m going to take questions.”

I was told, “Nobody is going to ask you any questions. They’re going to be too nervous.” I did it anyway.

I finished my talk and asked myself the first question: “What is your favorite color?” That got a chuckle and broke the ice. One by one, hands went up. I fielded questions for 90 minutes. People were keen to dig into my vision for Prison Fellowship and the future.

I am very fortunate in that at Prison Fellowship we’re not in a turn-around situation. In the absence of a president and CEO, Carl Dill, a board member who was formerly CIO of McDonald’s Corporation, worked with senior management to develop a 10-year strategic plan. I reviewed that strategic plan before my first day and said, “I’m not changing a word of this. It’s perfect.” My job is to lead us through that 10-year plan and add tactical detail as we go forward. And within a month of my becoming president and CEO, Carl was made Prison Fellowship’s board chairman. We now have wonderful continuity between our chairman, me and the senior team.

**What is it like to follow in the footsteps of your visionary former mentor Chuck Colson?**

That’s a really good question. Before I met Chuck, I had never met a man like him. I’ve never met one since. He was unique. He possessed an incredible ability as an apologist for Christ. He had a passion for biblical worldview. He also had a tremendous passion for the needs of incarcerated men and women.

I don’t know that there will ever be another like him. I’m certainly no Chuck Colson. You won’t see me writing 25-plus books. I have to bring my own vision and leadership style to Prison Fellowship.

I think one of the most important things is that in communicating about Prison Fellowship, we must lead with our mission and follow with our founder. With an older Christian generation you can say, “This is the prison ministry Chuck Colson founded.” But with a younger generation, you have to talk about what Prison Fellowship does, our mission, and then give the background and history.

It’s a tremendous opportunity to focus on what Prison Fellowship does in prisons nationwide. We have programs in 488 prisons across the country. We offer 76 Intensive Academies in 23 states. Over the next 10 years, our ambition is to grow to 172 Academies, with one in at least one men’s and one women’s prison in every state. The point is that we now lead with mission and follow with our founder.

**What encouragement would you share with nonprofit CEOs on connecting well with core constituencies?**

Let’s talk about donors. I meet many nonprofit leaders who are unbelievably uncomfortable with asking for money. Remember, as Psalm 24:1 says, “*The earth is the LORD’s and everything in it.*” It all belongs to God. Our job as nonprofit leaders is to help people whom God has given incredible amounts of resources to discern whether God is calling them to support our particular work and to help them find ways to do so.

There’s nothing manipulative in that. There’s no reason to be shy. I know God has called Prison Fellowship to do the work we do, to serve incarcerated men and women and their families. The only question for me when I’m sitting across the table from someone of significant means is whether God is calling them to support us in accomplishing that work. That’s it. Asking for money is an important part of what we do, and it’s how we align resources with the work we’ve been called to do. ●



PHOTO BY BRANDON ESSINGTON, PRISON FELLOWSHIP

James Ackerman visits with inmates at Folsom State Prison.

# Our Stories Matter

Use every opportunity to share yours.

**WE ALL HAVE A STORY TO BE TOLD.** Mine changed dramatically on April 16, 2016. You see, I can never get those lights out of head, nor that one sentence: “Ma’am, we hate to inform you that your husband is deceased.” The trooper said it like I had already known that outcome, but I honestly had no idea what he was trying to tell me. I had been staring at my husband Rasheed for a matter of seconds, but it seemed as if it had been an eternity. He hadn’t moved.

My rock, my world, my love was always going to be there — right? I knew there must have been a mistake. Sadly, there was not. In a matter of minutes, everything changed. He was once the reason behind my smile. His presence fueled my joy; now his absence is the reason behind its antithesis. My beloved husband was killed in a hit and run that April day in Orlando.

I went from being happy, feeling safe and being confidently faithful to the opposite. I went from being his wife to his widow. I went from being the storyteller to the one who needed the story told. As a television anchor, I have always understood the power of the media. I know firsthand what it is like to knock on the door of a grieving relative and ask them to spill his or her life story for a one-minute clip. Now I also know what it’s like to sit on the other side of the camera and beg for help from people you’ll never meet.

Though our stories are all different, we each have one to tell. Those stories are central to who we are as people, and as leaders. Knowing how to tell our stories well is vital. As a ministry leader, telling your story through broadcast, print or digital means is one of your greatest opportunities. People need to hear your voice. And in order for them to grow from what you’re sharing, you must help them connect with your story.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 says, *“And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*

Every story, every press conference and every interview you grant is an opportunity to do exactly what that Scripture asks of us. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

**1. Be Real:** In an interview, be yourself (just with more energy). The discomfort you may feel by pretending to be someone you’re not will be amplified on camera. It doesn’t just add 10 pounds to your physique; it magnifies your emotions. That can be a scary thing, but let it push you to speak as if you were chatting with a dear friend about sharing God’s love with those who need it most. The interviewer and the news consumer must connect with you.

**2. Be Vulnerable:** Do not fear telling a difficult story. We’ve all heard or probably said, “let your mess become your message.” It’s a popular saying because it is true. Opening up to the world about the most painful part of my life has been both incredibly difficult and extremely rewarding because I’ve heard from other hurting souls who needed comfort. It’s simple. People need to feel your authenticity. It keeps them watching or reading, and it keeps journalists returning to you for future interviews. It’ll also help you connect more deeply with believers from the pulpit.

**3. Be Honest:** Did you or someone in your organization make a mistake? Own up to it. It may sound like I’m oversimplifying, but I can’t tell you how many stories I’ve covered of leaders who fell deeper into trouble when they tried to cover up something simple. People understand that mistakes happen. Tell your side of the story. Explain what you know and admit what you do not, and then move on. The news crews usually will as well.

As for me, I’m healing. Every day isn’t easy, but I’m starting to feel more of God’s grace and my husband’s love with each passing day. I look forward to the day I am reunited; however, until then, I know God has left me here to continue telling more of his stories in order to help his people. I hope you do the same! ●

**KIMBERLY HOLMES WIGGINS** is a television journalist. She’s produced award-winning pieces that connect with diverse audiences. Kimberly graduated from Duke University and Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism. With a widow “sister,” she launched a faith-based retail company called Still His. You can connect with her at [Kimberly@StillHis.com](mailto:Kimberly@StillHis.com) or [StillHis.com](http://StillHis.com).





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(Matt 5:14–16)

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Learn more and register today at [www.outcomesconference.org](http://www.outcomesconference.org)



## Sharing the Story

Those whom you serve tell it best!

JILL'S HOUSE IS A CHRISTIAN nonprofit organization providing support for families with children who have intellectual disabilities. For the past six years, Jill's House has offered parents of children with disabilities a night of rest while their children enjoy a safe, fun overnight experience.

INTERVIEW WITH  
JOEL DILLON

Jill's House hopes to change the face of disability ministry in America so that each family of a child with special needs has respite within reach and access to a church that embraces them. As president and CEO of Jill's House, Joel Dillon is committed to finding ways to share the story of Christ with these families, and to share their stories with the world. He spoke with *Outcomes* about his work.

### Can you tell us about Jill's House?

The best way to get to know Jill's House is to learn a bit about the families God has called us to love and serve. In short, we serve families who are raising children with intellectual disabilities. The constant stress of raising children with intellectual disabilities takes an enormous amount of effort, and they have almost nowhere to turn for relief. Typically, they can't just call babysitters or send their kids to the grandparents for the night or the weekend.

Most importantly, more than 90 percent of the families we serve are outside the church. This doesn't necessarily mean that they are not Christians, but it does mean that they are cut off from the body of Christ in a significant

way. They are, essentially, an unreached people group. And like all of us, they are in desperate need of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### How do you serve these families?

Several times every year, parents drop off their kids with us for 24 to 48 hours at our "respite resort" in the Washington D.C. area or at one of our camp locations around the country (currently, we serve in Washington D.C., Maryland, Virginia, Indiana, Texas, Arizona, California and the state of Washington). While the kids are with us, they get an amazing experience in a safe, fun, loving and celebratory environment.

Meanwhile, parents get a break. They get to sleep through the night. They get to go on a date — often for the first time in years. They get to give undivided attention to their other kids. One mom even scheduled her child's stays with us around her chemotherapy sessions.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins helped us empirically measure our work. Years of data show that regular overnight respite brings and keeps down the stress level of these families. Relationships are strengthened. Health is restored. Marriages are saved.

### Where does evangelism fit into this?

I'd probably describe it as "relational evangelism." As long as a family's child has an intellectual disability and we can serve them safely, they are welcome at Jill's House, and we will love and serve them unconditionally.

We do this through Bible studies, support groups, social outings, etc. We host evangelistic retreats, where we take the whole family (parents, kids with disabilities, and typical siblings) away for a long weekend and provide childcare for the kids, so parents can hear from a speaker (generally someone who has raised a child with a disability) who presents the gospel and calls them to faith in Christ Jesus.

### How do you make your story connect?

The most effective way we've found to tell our story isn't to tell "our story" at all. We simply let our families talk about themselves and the difference Jill's House has made in their lives. Our families are our best spokespeople!

Learn more at ([jillshouse.org](http://jillshouse.org))

## Milestones

**APPOINTED** Dr. Tom De Vries, as the new president and CEO of the Willow Creek Association. He will succeed Gary Schwammlein in this role at the end of August. Since 2011, De Vries has served as the General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America.

**DIED** Dr. Stephen V. Monsma, age 80, author of a series of influential volumes on religious freedom, including his collaboration with Stanley Carlson-Thies: *Free to Serve: Protecting the Religious Freedom of Faith-Based Organizations* (Brazos Press, 2015). Monsma was a professor (Calvin College/Pepperdine University) and a former Michigan state legislator.

**DIED** H. Wilbert Norton, age 102, former missionary and educator who also founded Intervarsity's Urbana missions conference. He launched missions programs at several notable Christian universities/seminaries where he served.

## HEADLINES:

### Outcomes Conference 2018 – Register by June 30 for Best Rates!

Christian Leadership Alliance's Outcomes Conference 2018 will be held in Dallas, April 17–19, 2018. Many Christian leaders have already registered to attend, and you can receive the best conference rates if you register by June 30, 2017 ([OutcomesConference.org](http://OutcomesConference.org)).

Christ-honoring leaders like you are radically transforming lives around our globe today. At The Outcomes Conference 2018, we will celebrate and strengthen your leadership IMPACT! You'll experience powerful peer networking, Christ-centered thought leadership and practical, biblically based training.

Featured speakers will include Phyllis Henney Hendry, president and CEO, Lead Like Jesus; Robby Gallaty, senior pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church and founder/president of Replicate Ministries; Derwin L. Gray, a former NFL football player and founding/lead pastor of Transformation Church; Danielle Strickland, Western Territorial Justice Secretary, The Salvation Army, USA, and more! Nashville recording artist Kelly Minter and her band will serve as conference worship leaders.

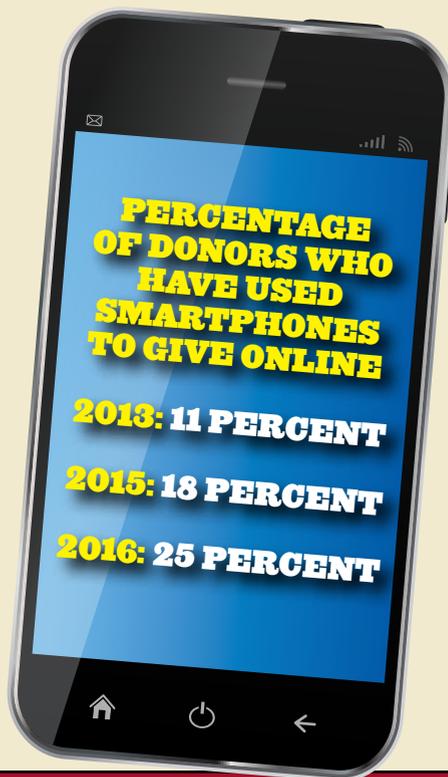
Register today at ([OutcomesConference.org](http://OutcomesConference.org)).

## MOBILE ONLINE GIVING TRENDS

According to the latest online giving survey commissioned by Dunham+Company and conducted by Campbell Rinker (conducted Nov. 2016 / released March 2017), one out of four donors (25 percent) say that they have used their smartphone to give through a charity's website, a 38 percent increase since the last survey. Of even greater note, 37 percent of Millennial donors say they have used their mobile device to give online, and even 10 percent from the Silent Generation say they have done so.

"With the increase in giving through a mobile device, it is no longer enough for charities to have their website and giving form mobile-optimized," said Rick Dunham, president and CEO of Dunham+Company. "Instead, it is imperative for them to design first for mobile to ensure the website and giving form render properly on such a device."

Learn more: [bit.ly/Mobile-Giving-Trends](http://bit.ly/Mobile-Giving-Trends)



"A story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way ..."

FLANNERY O'CONNOR

## News for today's Christian leaders

### Outcomes Academy (Online) Modules — Summer 2017 (June 12 Registration Deadline)

Summer modules for CLA's Outcomes Academy (Online) are now available for registration. These in-depth 10-hour online modules offer practical, biblically based leadership training facilitated by frontline experts. They're a great opportunity to connect with peers from across the nation, and offer you the ability to advance your career in Christian nonprofit leadership without ever leaving home. Built on a state-of-the-art Azusa Pacific University College platform, these modules were designed specifically for today's Christian nonprofit leaders.

#### SUMMER LINEUP:

#### 1. CCNL Leadership (Executive Leadership / Board Governance)

*\*Required for those in CCNL credential program*

This module provides the leader of a nonprofit organization an executive-level view of what is required for God-honoring personal, organizational and board leadership.

#### 2. The Role of Money in Your Organization

This module prepares executive leaders to navigate the role of money in organizational life, including leading teams in making wise economic decisions.

#### 3. The Annual Fund: Securing Ongoing

#### Donations

This module helps emerging development professionals understand the role of the Annual Fund in engaging and solidifying donor relationships as part of a diversified development program.

#### 4. Big Picture Financial Management

This module helps leaders think about "the big picture" role that accounting plays in the overall ministry, including communicating finances with boards and committees.

#### 5. Strategies for Acquiring and Retaining Talent

This module equips you to strategically acquire and retain the talented people your nonprofit organization needs. Build and maintain your talent acquisition lifecycle process.

#### 6. Fundamentals of Successful Marketing

This module helps Christian leaders understand the fundamental elements of marketing and how they can help to differentiate the organization and its offering(s).

**Registration Deadline:** June 12

**Modules Begin:** June 19

Learn more and register:

([christianleadershipalliance.org/academy](http://christianleadershipalliance.org/academy)).

### ECFA Releases Generosity Project Report

Check out the Generosity Project Report just released by ECFA. It highlights giving trends of

donors from each generational age bracket. The study contains data from over 16,000 donors who took the survey. Key findings include the types of organizations that Millennials give to, why a Boomer gives to a particular ministry, and trends in giving for each generational segment. The report provides insights into more effective ways to recruit and maintain new, younger donors. To obtain a copy of the report, visit ([ECFA.org](http://ECFA.org)).

### National Christian Foundation Donates Campus

Four years after first offering a free 217-acre Northfield, Mass., campus that was once home to D.L. Moody's school for girls, the National Christian Foundation (NCF) finally found a taker in Thomas Aquinas College and The Moody Center.

NCF acquired the campus free from the Green family, owner of the Hobby Lobby franchise, who acquired it after the Moody school moved out and put \$5 million into renovations with the intent of offering it to Christian colleges free of charge. When no takers emerged, they awarded the campus to NCF, who continued the search.

Thomas Aquinas College, a Catholic liberal arts school based in California, will occupy most of the campus, while The Moody Center will use the rest to build a museum honoring the evangelist D. L. Moody, restoring his former home and the auditorium where he held revivals.



# CONTENT THAT CONNECTS

## Telling the Old, Old Story in a digital world

By Jamie Janosz and Pete Distler

SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, while leaving my Sunday church service in downtown Chicago, I (*Pete*) noticed a young man standing off to the side in the church foyer. Headed to brunch with friends, I was stopped in my tracks. The Holy Spirit literally yanked me to his side, urging me to pay attention to him.

“What’s your name?” I asked, extending a hand. As we began to talk, the young man opened up and shared his story. With a heavy heart he told me his girlfriend was being abused by an uncle, and how he had felt God’s urging to find his way into church that day. It was a desperate, 15-minute story exchange about love misused, the soul seeking peace and his need for God’s blessing.

The mobile device in his hand may have given him easy access to spiritual truth, but how would he have found it amongst the clutter of his other media options? We know that our God works in miraculous ways, but in that moment he ordained a divinely appointed relational opportunity.

Ironically, this meeting occurred within one mile of where 19th century evangelist Dwight Lyman Moody built his ministry using the available “media” of his time. Today, the ministry where we serve, Moody Global Ministries, helps millions of people take the next step in their faith journeys through higher education and media ministries.

Our 130-year old history began with a young shoe salesman who believed in using “every

means possible” to share the Word of God. Moody rented a raunchy, smelly tavern, where he enrolled 18 orphans in a makeshift Sunday school class; the school quickly grew beyond capacity to number 1,500. It is incredible to note that through Moody’s lifetime of ministry, and without the “instant communication” of the Internet, he touched millions of lives for God’s glory!

Today, we have the same important story to share. Yet, when confronted with media clutter and useless digital meandering on mobile devices, we may ask, “How can our story, God’s story, connect with those who need to hear it most?”

### AN OLD STORY TO TELL

There is a hymn we sang in my (*Jamie*) childhood church. Written by Katherine Hankey, the opening lines go, “I love to tell the story of unseen things above, Of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.” And today, as a writer and creative within a ministry organization, I must say that I do indeed love to tell the story of God and his work through the church.

While some fundraisers and marketers are tasked with creatively compelling people to save the ocean or buy a new car, I am privileged to communicate how lives are forever changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the same time, the importance of this message increases my burden to tell it well. How do we communicate our stories in a way that honors God, supports the cause of ministry, connects with readers and moves people to action?



## CAPTURE YOUR AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION

First, we need to get their attention in the midst of the media clutter. My (*Jamie*) 90-year-old mother-in-law, for example, receives as many as five direct mail envelopes every day. That's approximately 25 envelopes a week, 100 a month! And each morning, I delete at least 20 solicitation messages from my e-mail inbox.

In that flood of information, our challenge is to capture the attention of our audience and motivate them to act on our behalf. The solution: powerful, old-fashioned storytelling that captures the heart of your constituents. As you consider stories that you could share about your ministry organization, be on the lookout for those that are both emotional and remarkable.

During a routine interview with Moody Bible Institute students, one of the two scruffy, sandal-wearing young men showed me a snapshot on his phone. A 20-year-old student stood in the midst of club-goers on Chicago's nightlife-centered Rush Street, holding up a 16 by 24-inch piece of cardboard bearing two words: FREE PRAYER (shown on page 13).

"Wow!" I remarked. "What kind of response do you get?" Ethan told me people were curious, and many actually stopped for prayer. One couple came up and inquired about what he was doing. As he prayed for them, the woman burst into tears.

You see, I didn't need to tell anyone our Moody students were remarkable. This story shows it, while also carrying an emotional message. Be sure your story communicates heart and human emotion. Well-told stories have the power to bypass the need for bells and whistles.

## ENGAGE THEIR CURIOSITY

How often have we clicked on the latest BuzzFeed article to find out which *10 Insects to Avoid* or what *5 Vacation Spots Every Family Should Visit*? These stories rarely live up to their hype, but we still fall prey to engaging with the posts.

One way to get people to read your story is by arousing their natural sense of curiosity and increasing their awareness of



the need for spiritual filling. What questions are people asking that have answers within the day-to-day work of your ministry organization?

We've turned Moody Radio programs, author blogs and even professors' academic articles into short-format digital pieces to successfully engage our audience.

For example, following the tragic shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, we sent an e-mail titled, "Grief and Grace: How Should We Respond to Orlando?" Moody Radio host Chris Brooks did not

have time to turn around a published piece. So instead, timely content from his radio broadcast was adapted into a short-form digital piece giving biblical suggestions on how to represent God's love to people in times of tragedy.

In addition to such pieces sensitive to breaking news, we also feature less time-sensitive articles. For example, we asked "Is God Okay with Casual Cursing?" Moody professor Dr. Kevin Zuber was interviewed on *Chris Fabry Live* about Christians' increasing tolerance for rough language. Zuber gave helpful questions to determine whether your speech is honoring to God.

The digital piece took a relevant question and provided readers with both an answer and a link to the podcast. You could also link to previous articles or other material produced by your organization. Those types of short-format digital pieces — based on available content — capitalize on our audience's natural sense of curiosity and drive engagement leading to spiritual formation.

## MAKE YOUR DONOR THE HERO

Finally, work on making institutional stories less about "us" and more about your donors and constituency. Rather than focusing on how successful we are, spend more time telling how we can help them serve God well.

First, it is critical that we get out of the way and let donors and constituents tell their stories. We have filmed videos of radio listeners who are serving Christ well. One, a director at a Cancer Care Center, listens to Moody Radio each day before her shift and allows God to use her to serve others.

In an e-mail to donors, we featured an interview with a farming family who gave a student scholarship. The donor said, "We are very ordinary people. Nobody in our family is wealthy. So we're not giving out of wealth; we're giving out of blessings." This demonstrated that ordinary people (individuals like our donors) can be heroes.

Second, we can change the language of donor communication. Rather than telling what we do, we emphasize what they can do through our ministry. Instead of saying, "Harvest Ministry is feeding the hungry with your help," we say, "You are feeding the hungry with your gift to Harvest Ministry." Rather than producing an annual report, what about a "gratitude report?"

Strive to make every piece less about us and more about them (almost biblical, isn't it?). This small change of emphasis — something as simple as increased use of the word "you" in



direct mail — places emphasis on the reader, allowing them to enter your story and invest in your ministry.

Tell simple stories of incredible, redemptive, God-transforming events. Let people see how they play a key role in fulfilling the Great Commission and telling the remarkable story of the gospel.

## A NEW WAY TO TELL IT

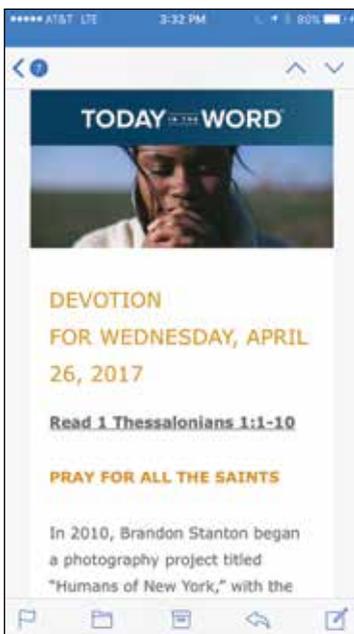
The stories we tell may rapidly manifest themselves across a wide range of publicly accessible media channels like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. However, will our remarkable story cut through the daily news storms that disseminate globally through digital media?

Are there techniques you can use to create “thirst” for spiritual material and gracefully reach those who engage digitally? How can you encourage them to share your material with like-minded souls in their social media networks? And will that remarkable story enrapture the “fly-by” content, thumb-scroll audience to stop and absorb it?

## AWAKEN SPIRITUAL CURIOSITY

Technically speaking, digitally layering your incredible story into multiple “short-form” factors with “deep link” rich media options will help reach your audience in a way they are eager and able to receive it. For example, a daily Bible verse is overlaid on a related graphic, communicated through social media. The goal is awakening spiritual yearning. This simple piece can be followed by a call-to-action in the form of a tightly edited short-form audio, video, graphic or editorial highlight on a landing page.

If time, space, curiosity and spiritual yearnings awaken, you can engage your audience on a landing page for more information, redirect them to a mobile responsive website or even give them an easy-to-complete form (requesting their e-mail and a checklist of interests). Thus, your storyboard can digitally span multiple form factors. This permits seamless consumption with options to engage your ministry organization.



can significantly increase impact and momentum over the course of the weeks, months and years your story lives.

## ENGAGE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Audiences will organically gravitate to quality discipleship stories. With small media investments, your story can increase exposure by carefully using key words in your digital copy. If your content is very relevant to audiences, Google and Facebook offer favorable rates to lower your cost. By using carefully aligned key words with selected social issues, you can digitally fan the flame in order to rapidly distribute spiritual content to dry souls.

We can feed souls by including social media messaging with engagement opportunities linking your audience to relevant content including web podcasting. Layering digital media in this way permits progressive consumption responsive to an individual's interest and availability to absorb the information.

Facebook posts used the contemporary issue of Betsy DeVos' appointment to head the Department of Education to draw attention to a Moody Radio podcast about education and the Christian community. In her program, *Up for Debate*, Julie Roys discussed whether public schools indoctrinate children with secular values. Offering succinct digital journeys like these that focus on key social issues can help raise doctrinal questions and lead to personal application.

Measuring your audience engagement will help you identify the increasing value of the content you offer. The chart below shows a two-plus-year usage trend of Moody podcast content, which is growing quickly and satisfying the souls of those seeking to apply God's Word. These trends show what your organization might experience by engaging in strategic digital discipleship.



Our story may not be new, but it bears remarkable power to engage and ignite hearts in this modern age for Jesus. The Holy Spirit blesses our storytelling to cut through the

clutter and reach individuals, even in the midst of this crazy, fast-paced digital world. What a privilege we have to communicate the remarkable story of God and his work in ways that impact today's digital consumers, transform lives for God's glory and engage new advocates to do his work. ●

**JAMIE JANOSZ** is the content development manager for Moody Global Ministries. She has also served Moody in PR, integrated marketing and donor development. Jamie is author of *When Others Shuddered: Eight Women Who Refused to Give Up* (Moody Publishers, 2014), and is a contributing author for *Today in the Word*, *Christianity Today's Hermeneutics* and more ([jamiejanosz.blogspot.com](http://jamiejanosz.blogspot.com)). **PETE DISTLER** is director of digital marketing for Moody Global Ministries ([moodyglobal.org](http://moodyglobal.org)). He recently joined Moody with digital experience in the mobile and advertising industries. The Moody digital team encompasses creative design, web content management, inbound/outbound marketing, media buying, social media, analytics and product management.

# HEART CONNECTIONS



## Living out your faith online

By Tami Heim

Social media affords Christians an immeasurable opportunity to make heart connections that hold eternal consequence. Since the launch of the first social media site in 1997, Six Degrees, social platforms continue to evolve at a pace faster than most can track. As the former chief publishing officer for Thomas Nelson, it was stunning for me to witness the epic rise in content creators and the swell of people on Facebook, Twitter and blog sites. Nothing has slowed. The barriers to entry, once governed by traditional publishers, are long gone. The gates remain wide open for whosoever will enter in.

The social media landscape continues to shift, as carefully curated and thoughtfully crafted messages are the exception, not the rule. Communication is easy, fast and primarily uncensored. It's prone to bring out the worst in people because there is little accountability or conscious respect for the gap between rational reaction and instant response. Opinions launch with no consideration for consequences or long-term impact.

With the flurry and freedom of expression emerge intolerance, a loss of innocence and a dark side most are not prepared to counter. Social behaviors arise, often characterized as damaging and addictive. Enough time has passed that researchers are able to effectively measure the adverse effects of social obsession on individuals, families and relationships. Google "The adverse

effects of social media" and you'll find more than 1.3 million results in 0.68 seconds!

For a decade I have set up camp online as a Christ-follower, unpacking all that is possible in a digital age. I daily ask myself what it means to live in such a time as this, when truth can easily travel to the ends of the earth. I have decided to not be silent or intimidated by the darkness. I am resolved to do my part to display light. The possibilities are enormously exciting for those willing to be on mission and eager to redeem social media space for God's purpose and glory. I imagine one day being able to echo Joseph's words from Genesis 50:20: "*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*"

For example, Global Media Outreach trains online missionaries who are dedicated to this global mission field. At this writing, the ministry has recorded over 176 million decisions for Christ, and they have actively engaged over 136 million in discipleship training. What is important for us to understand is that every Christian online has the potential to be an agent of redemption.

A day doesn't pass where your words aren't influencing the thinking, behavior or development of another person. You create, lead and influence with the words you release. Think about the last words you deposited in lives of your spouse, kids, parents, friends, boss, colleagues, staff or even the last comment you posted

in a rambling digital stream of conversation. God's Word has a specific warning about how we use our words: *"But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned"* (Matt. 12:36-37).

This is highly relevant in an age when words are viral — and forever archived. Your words carry the power to bring life and truth, or to take both away. Are you ready to be accountable for every word? Even the ones you easily dismiss as casual or insignificant? With your words something either begins or continues. A simple or brief post, tweet, text or status update can have an immediate impact on someone's day. When you deliberately select life-giving words and multiply them over time, God uses them to ignite life change.

There are several questions Christ followers must ask about their digital imprint.

- What is the Christ-like response to living out faith in a digital era?
- How do Christ's followers best steward access to worldwide connections to build authentic relationships?
- What does it mean to reflect the character of Christ in a space where anything goes?
- How do lovers of Jesus listen carefully to the chatter and embrace the social stream as a portal into the hearts and minds of those who need to know the hope that sustains us?
- How do Christians resist the temptation to self-righteousness and instead seize the opportunity to be instruments of righteousness?

## SIX GUIDELINES FOR LIVING OUT YOUR FAITH ONLINE

Here are six simple guidelines, rooted in God's Word, for digital influence in such a time as this:

### 1. Acknowledge God

Don't hesitate to make mention of God in your social conversations. People are seeking to be connected to something bigger, and you have access to the God of all Creation. Plus, acknowledging God will keep you aware of his presence and your accountability for the words you release. *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being"* (Rev. 4:11).

### 2. Praise God

Be quick to offer praise regardless of your circumstances. Sometimes the most difficult experiences are opportunities for others to see what it looks for someone with hope to walk through trials, mourn loss or overcome adversity. The drift of life changes as God inhabits your praise. Your attitude in "all things" transforms every situation. *"The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised"* (Job 1:21b).

### 3. Give Thanks

Show gratitude and communicate your appreciation for whatever is happening in your life. Saying "Thank you" in the digital town halls is a beautiful way to affirm the value of

# WHAT IS THE CHRIST-LIKE RESPONSE TO LIVING OUT FAITH IN A DIGITAL ERA?

the people in your life. Gratitude brings a spirit of calm and confidence to you and those around you. *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God"* (Phil. 4:6).

### 4. Offer Instruction

Share your knowledge and be helpful to others. Ensure that what you share is good, kind and true. Knowledge given is power amplified. If you have the answer or an important insight, contribute by speaking the truth in love. *"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts"* (Col. 3:16).

### 5. Speak Encouragement

Look for the good in situations, take the high road and find ways to lift someone's spirit. Make it a practice to be a lifter, not a leaner. Pay attention, listen and help others see a possibility that might be too hard for them to see on their own. *"Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind"* (Phil. 2:1-2).

### 6. Share Hope

Look for opportunities to share your story and the difference Christ has made in your life. Your witness is yours to share and hard for others to dispute. Be ready and look for opportunities to tell others what God has done for you. *"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"* (1 Pet. 3:15).

Your words are the keys to making heart connections in a digital world. Use discernment, be intentional and steward well every word you share. ●

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**TAMI HEIM** is the president and CEO of Christian Leadership Alliance ([christianleadershipalliance.org](http://christianleadershipalliance.org)). You can join her in conversation on Facebook, Twitter, Google +, LinkedIn and Instagram. She is easy to find because she is "Tami Heim" everywhere she camps. She is co-author of *@stickyJesus: How to Live Out Your Faith Online* (Abingdon Press, 2012).

# What's Working Now!

## Breaking down successful nonprofit marketing campaigns

By Shannon Litton and Josh Miller

Ministry communications and marketing are complicated. Just when we figure out how to drive a social strategy that works for our organization, we wake up one morning and discover that Facebook has changed its algorithm. We sigh, complain a bit and then start over. Or we've finally cracked the e-mail acquisition struggle on our site, only to learn that Google is now punishing our search ranking for that pop-up box that converts so well. Or maybe, if we're really honest, nothing is working for us. We can't seem to get momentum anywhere. /// The good news is that you're not alone. The better news is that there is hope. What may feel like the wild West of marketing is also a wide open space that rewards those with creativity and the guts to try something new. In fact, if you're not failing at something, you're probably not trying hard enough. And while failure can be a badge of honor if it is a stepping stone to success, there is also great benefit to learning from others. As we work with ministries of all sizes, shapes, missions and budgets, these are a few areas where we continue to see success:

**1. Marketing Automation:** If you need to double your staff but not your budget, marketing automation may be your answer. At its core, marketing automation is using software to automate repetitive marketing tasks, but from a more empathetic perspective. It's about meeting our customers on their terms.

Most organizations push e-mails out based on their needs (regular newsletters, donation requests, seasonal calls to action, etc.). Marketing automation allows us to tailor customer-centric content to our audience without the heavy lifting of a manual send. According to Autopilot's 2015 "Marketing Automation Performance Report," organizations are currently seeing double the response from triggered communications over traditional e-mail blasts.

The first step is to understand what can be automated in your organization. Customer follow-up, thank you e-mails, product or resource launches and even your donation funnel are great opportunities. It's about defining tasks your staff replicates every day or week that could be more efficiently handled through software. While the setup takes an initial investment, freeing your staff to work on bigger projects and getting them out of the weeds of easily automated tasks can lift their spirits and benefit your budget.

Consider these examples:

- *Welcome campaigns* respond to new signups by consistently providing orientation information over a period of time.
- *Cart or donation abandons* (incomplete purchase or donation transactions) provide a reminder and an offer of additional assistance.
- *Signup campaigns* provide timely, necessary reminders and information to those who are new volunteers or event registrants.
- *Purchase or donation acknowledgement e-mail series* provide an immediate "thank you," and can also provide ongoing education on a purchased resource or on how a donation impacts the organization. (Reminders following an event extend the importance of the event in constituents' minds, and show you really care.)

**2. Content Strategy:** One of the reasons we love working with ministries is their meaningful and emotive stories. But we can have too much of a good thing and tell so many stories that we don't tell them well.

Another regular challenge with content is that it is just that: regular. We've all been there at 11 p.m.



## 5BY5

**ORGANIZATION:** 5by5 is a full service strategic digital and marketing agency located in Brentwood, Tenn.

**MISSION:** 5by5 was born from one simple but heartfelt belief: Organizations driven by change deserve access to the best marketing strategies, tools and implementation available anywhere.

**SERVICES:** We deliver exceptional strategy, best-in-class creative and effective execution to provide optimal results. (Our services include brand and messaging development, campaign creation, digital marketing and website development).

**CLIENTS:** Some of the change maker clients we serve include LifeWay, Food for the Hungry, Growing Leaders, WIN Warehouse, The Barnabas Group and Awana.

**WEBSITE:** [www.5by5agency.com](http://www.5by5agency.com)

trying to push out a last social post for the day so we can check a box. We're never really happy with the result, but we know we'll be right back there tomorrow night. Content strategy is about balancing planned and urgent content. If we've planned what we have to say, it makes it easier to spend time on urgent needs as they arise.

A content strategy is simply a plan that guides everything we share and produce. Here's how it works:

- **Know your goals:** Any marketing strategy should align with an organization's goals. Content strategy is no different. Know the overarching goals of the organization, and create a content strategy to support those goals. For example, if the organization is involved in a capital campaign as a major emphasis for the year, a significant amount of content should be allocated to support it.

## When in doubt about what's working, just ask.

- **Plan and approve:** Content is a fine balance between planning and leaving room for urgent or timely news and information. But just because we don't know what the urgent news will be for the fall doesn't mean we can't plan ahead. There are key elements: stories, highlights and content pillars (white papers, research findings, annual reports) that we can and should anticipate. By outlining the plan once or twice a year, we can drastically reduce the "immediate approval needed" e-mails that circulate before we post or publish content.
- **Calendar:** One of the greatest stress-relieving tools for an organization is a content calendar. Typically, it is a running 12-month tool that starts with holidays, organization events and large promotions. In it we establish how we should support these through our marketing channels. Too often we let the channel drive the content and lack consistency across our platforms. The calendar also makes it easy to find space for new initiatives. There is a lot of relief in getting everything down on paper. With an agreed-upon plan in place, you can go to sleep easier and maybe a little earlier.

**3. Podcasts:** Podcasts are on the rise again. A few years back, it seemed podcasts were going the way of the QR code, but

the past few years have shown that podcasts are back and growing consistently year over year.

Podcasts are a content feed that someone can subscribe to via a number of platforms such as iTunes, Google Play or Stitcher. Edison Research tells us that 21 percent of the population over age 12 has listened to a podcast within the last month (Edison Research, *The Podcast Consumer*, 2016).

In 2016, we worked with Christian parenting expert Dr. Meg Meeker to launch a biweekly podcast, *Parenting Great Kids with Dr. Meg Meeker*. The years prior we had seen significant growth of her online content, social audiences and e-mails, but we knew the real magic happened when people "heard" from Dr. Meg. On stage, in front of audiences, people get to experience her passion and encouragement in a way that doesn't translate in writing. Her podcast went to No. 1 on the iTunes chart in the Kids and Parenting category within the first month, and it continues to grow. The engagement of her audience on other mediums has skyrocketed as well.

There is a great opportunity for ministries to expand their reach by featuring stories and content, and engaging leaders in a podcast format in which audiences can regularly hear (literally) from them wherever they want. Another bonus, podcast audiences skew much younger than many other media, reaching generations we need to build into for our future.

- 4. Creative Campaigns:** We could all name memorable corporate advertising campaigns such as the Geico gecko, Apple's IBM/Mac juxtaposition, and the "Can you hear me now?" spokesperson who recently changed teams. Big brands use campaigns to creatively break through the media noise and get our attention. Though nonprofits are dealing with the same noise, we often fail to creatively express ourselves. The only time some ministries engage in creative campaigns is around a capital campaign. These campaigns often have their own logos, brand statements and creative. Here's the difference between a brand and a creative campaign:

- **Brand Campaigns:** Our organization's brand identity is critical. It should be intentionally designed and defined, including names, visual elements (logos, fonts, images, etc.) and verbal elements (branding statements, boilerplate text, language to use or not use, etc.). Once defined, it should undergo nothing more than a simple refresh for seven to 10 years, or even more. Our brand reinforces why we exist and is used to guide many decisions beyond marketing. It is developed as the overarching messaging for all audiences. Consistency is the key to a strong brand.
- **Creative Campaigns:** A campaign is a specific expression of the brand identity. It is never in opposition to the brand, but it may highlight a particular element such as a new program, new direction, fundraising need or even target a specific audience segment. Most campaigns have a one- to three-year lifespan, and they can be more creative, using humor, story or other elements to cut through the clutter. Campaigns allow the freedom to create without weakening our core and consistent brand.

When in doubt about what's working, just ask. Too often we sit at conference room tables wishing to know our audience's favored mode of communication or types of media they consume. Data helps remove subjectivity from decision making, and it may be gathered through our own platforms or via surveys and market research.

Let's get out there in this big open space of potential. Take a step, evaluate, tweak and keep moving. These are days of change. As ministry change makers, we are ready to lead the way. ●

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**SHANNON LITTON**, CEO/president, and **JOSH MILLER**, CCO, 5by5, bring 30-plus years of combined experience in marketing, technology and nonprofit management. They build and execute strategies that lead organizations to new levels. Prior to establishing 5by5, Shannon co-founded a successful agency and provided marketing consulting to over 300 nonprofits, and Josh led the development team for one of the largest digital agencies in the Southeast.

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*Medi-Share is not health insurance. Medi-Share is now available in Montana. \*Seniors must have Medicare parts A and B to qualify.*



# Compassionate

It's the Golden Rule in marketing.

By Dan Kennedy

I STOOD ON A CHAIR in the middle of 30 ministry leaders. I counted to three. Shouting began. Disorder ensued. My plan worked.

We had just completed a communication exercise. The leaders were divided into the six divisions of their organization. Each division was assigned the task of listing everything they were asking their target audience to do — the “calls to action” of their messaging. Each group easily came up with at least five specific asks. The kicker? The entire room — six separate divisions — shared one common audience.

Yes, this one audience represented thousands of individuals, but in our exercise, for that one person, six different divisions within one organization vied for their attention at any given time. You see where I'm going here. This siloed approach to communication meant that this one person was potentially asked to do at

least 30 different things — by just one organization. And that's just one organization of many wanting their attention.

And so I stood on that one chair, representing that one person. I hoped to demonstrate how it felt to him or her. So I asked each leader in the room to pick a different call to action, wait until I counted to three, and then at the same time shout it out. One ... two ... three.

- “Sign up for this conference!”
- “Buy this resource!”
- “Get this great tip!”
- “Tell a friend!”
- “Take this survey!”

All great messages, but I didn't hear any of them. Just a dull roar. At that point, we took a much needed break.



PHOTO BY SAMUEL ZELLER, UNSPLASH.COM

# Communication

## **BECOMING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATORS**

This story is not unique. To their credit, this organization faced a difficult truth and chose to take the hard steps to do something about it. This simple demonstration allowed us to introduce the idea of “compassionate communication.”

What does compassionate communication mean? It means applying the proverbial Golden Rule to every aspect of our marketing efforts. It means treating our target audience (a term we use lovingly) as... people. People we care about. We care if they are getting barraged with messages. We care if we are filling their inbox. We care if our messages are unclear. We care that our messages use words that are accessible to them.

We expend so much effort being a ministry (in the traditional sense) that we sometimes forget this. That includes me and my own organization. So what can we do about it? How can we become compassionate communicators?

## **ANSWERING THAT QUESTION: FROM FABRIC SOFTENER TO BUSINESS AS MISSION**

I have spent the better part of 20 years seeking to answer that last question. From learning at Procter & Gamble to business-as-missions in China to a nonprofit marketing agency, I’ll be the first to say it’s not easy. But it’s doable. And worth it. Why? Hopefully we can agree that compassionate communication is the right thing to do. But it’s also the most effective thing to do — a clear best practice.

Becoming compassionate communicators is the number one thing you can do to increase engagement with your audiences — all of them. From donors, we hope to increase giving. From potential members, it’s to secure or increase membership. From prospective school families, it’s to increase applications. From staff, it’s retention. And so on. Compassionate communication works, but you have to work for it.

## LET'S GET PRACTICAL: BUILDING AN AUDIENCE PERSONA

Begin with the idea that marketing professionals are audience advocates. It's our job to represent — sometimes to fight for — what our audience wants. We know this, but in the busyness of our work it is very hard to remember, and even harder to make decisions accordingly.

Rather than thinking in terms of an amorphous group called “the audience,” build an “audience persona,” a simple, single personal profile of your target audience (or, using softer language, those whom you desire to reach). This one extra step will make communication decisions simpler, more efficient and much more effective. Your persona can be as basic as a name with a simple label (think “Pastor Jerry”), or as elaborate as a fully fleshed out “bio board” with a picture, name, long-form description and more.

The more you know about your audience, the more accurately you can build your audience persona. Remember, this is single profile that captures the most important and most consistent aspects of your target audience. Ask yourself:

- **Demographics:** How old are they? What is their gender? Where do they live? Where do they work? What is their role? What do you know about their organization?
- **Psychographics:** What is important to them? What do they need? What are their challenges? What motivates them? What do they fear?
- **Perceptions:** What do they think about you? What do they say you do for them? What do they say you do well? Who else could they go to for something similar? What do they say you are terrible at? What do they say your organization's name means? What do they say is your mission? What keeps them engaged with your organization?
- **A name.** Don't skip this. Nothing is makes it more personal than giving this persona a name. Why? Because as marketers, we *target* an audience, but we talk to Bob. We *share* with Kim. We're careful about what we *send* to Paul. Some organizations create a persona using a fictional name. The advantage is that you get to customize the profile to represent the kind of person you want to reach. The downside is that it lacks a level of humanness. The other approach is to use a real person who closely matches your target audience. The advantage, of course, is that it makes it truly personal. The downside is that particular person might not fit all the characteristics you deem important.

The process, like the final product, can be done simply or on a grand scale. This will be proportional to your challenges and resources. Here's a basic framework for the process:

- 1. Start with leadership alignment.** Bottom line: this tool only works if your leadership team is aligned to the prioritization of your target audience(s). Here's why. While the people you directly serve might be the focus of your mission (we call this your ministry model), you also have to know who keeps the lights on (we call this your financial model). To use a corporate example, the focus of P&G's product Pampers is babies, while P&G's target audience is the mom who

is doing the shopping. In Christian schools, while the mission is often focused on students, marketing starts with prospective parents (and usually the mom doing the research).

- 2. Ask internally.** The people in your organization know a lot about your audience. Especially those on the front lines answering the phone, hearing your praises and your shortcomings, reading comments on Facebook. Institutional knowledge is invaluable, but you can't stop there.
- 3. Seek qualitative input.** Be honest. When is the last time you intentionally sat down and asked the questions above to the people you want to reach? Do 30 minute interviews with 10 of them. Hold several focus groups with gatherings of six to eight people who match your criteria (and hold on as you listen to them talk to each other!). Write down the words they say (avoid summarizing what you heard them say; their exact words matter significantly). After the interviews, carefully find the themes. Capture this in your audience persona.
- 4. Gather quantitative data.** What percentage of your total audience does this audience persona actually match? At Kumveka, we love using online survey tools. So does... everyone. Use them sparingly and keep them short. Done right, it sends the message that “we really want to know you.”

## WHO DOES THIS WELL?

Here are a few of our unbiased favorites (yes, they are our clients and we love them) and the people they work hard to communicate compassionately to:

- **International Mission Board:** “Pastor Jerry”
- **Association of Christian Schools International:** “Head of School Jesse”
- **Accord Network:** “Executive Director Matt”
- **Music Mission Kiev:** “Stephanie the Musician”

## WHEW. GOT IT. WHAT'S NEXT?

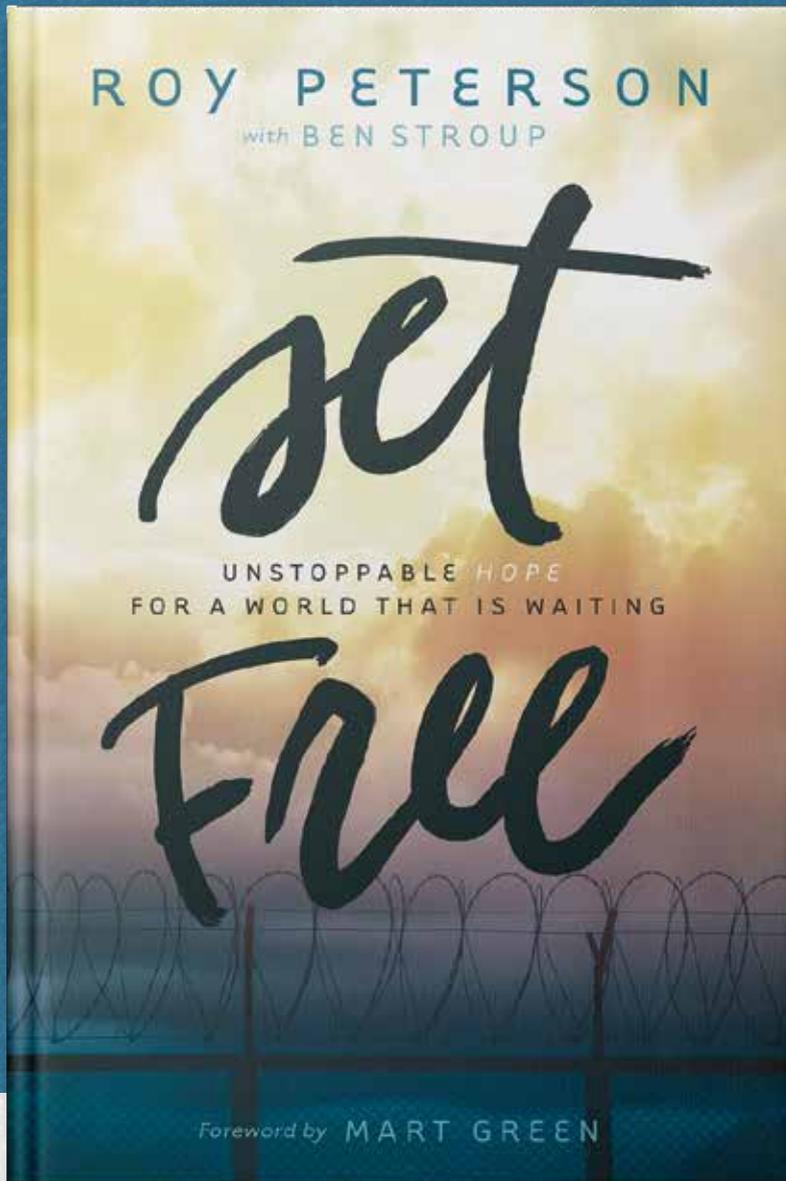
Ready for the next level? Do it again. Who is next on your audience priority list? Make an audience persona for them. Every new audience persona you build allows you to think about delivering different messages using different channels to different audience segments based on their unique needs (segmentation). Yes, this will require a messaging matrix and a marketing calendar, but it's all doable. Keeping your audience persona in mind is a critical practice for those seeking to be compassionate (and did I mention effective?) communicators.

What about you? Are you a compassionate communicator? What makes this challenging? Where have you found success? Drop me a line, but be kind; I prefer bullet points. ●

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# The Wardrobe of Ministry

## How well-dressed leaders measure success

By Joe Class

**SOME LEADERS DON** a *coat of business-mindedness*. Others sport a *cloak of faithful intentions*. But it's much more than a matter of personal taste. Business leaders understand the value of measuring their activities in terms of return on investment (ROI). They have data to plug into a precise formula. For some, it's a matter of survival. For others, it's a matter of success.

Should ministries care about their ROI? Can they care too much about ROI? I've spent countless hours with ministry leaders, boards, and donors, as they've been stretched by the powerful dynamic tension between ministry results and ROI. The differences may be subtle, but they are substantial.

Some claim faithfulness is an adequate measurement of ministry — a matter of heart. They might even go so far as to accuse ministries that measure too many results of having “lost their spirituality.” Another group argues ministries cannot be really spiritual without accountability and an eye on outcomes.

Some 30 years ago, I watched a CEO new to the North American donor community initiate a plan to shift funds to ministry that had previously been used in “administration and fundraising.” Not a bad intention. This deeply spiritual man had an honest passion for sharing the gospel globally. But his zeal brought him to a surprising idea. People were giving to the ministry, “as unto the Lord,” so he decided it was no longer important or even necessary to tell donors how their funds had been used. God knew how they had been used.

This leader wanted to see more of God's gifts applied directly to ministry. The unexpected result was that donors stopped giving! In a short time, this organization's long, excellent reputation was irreparably damaged. Without reports, donors lost confidence. In their hearts they may have been sincerely following God. However, they had a nagging concern about the spiritual aspects of their personal stewardship. I doubt a single penny was mishandled by this ministry. However, without accountability, this organization's donors looked elsewhere to invest. The donors' personal stewardship caused them to seek results-oriented causes to fund. But money should never dictate the direction of a ministry.

When a ministry involves Contexture International in their fundraising and communications strategies and production, we begin the conversation with three questions.

1. What do you believe God is asking you to do?
2. What will it look like when you do this?
3. How will you know when you've done it?

Answers to the first question are generally broad. Something like, “God wants us to reach every refugee with the gospel.” That's a worthwhile goal at this moment in history, as responsiveness is strong because of political and cultural issues. But it is hard to build numbers around such a vague idea.

Answering the second question requires attention to strategy. Just exactly *how* do you intend to do this thing God wants you to do? Where? When? By whom? With whom? How long? How much? How will you know you've reached *every* refugee?



## The dynamic tension between outcomes and the faithful execution of plans is about more than just our desired results.

The third question defines what must happen for God to say, “Well done, faithful servant.” Initially this is a matter of desire and a choice. But how does God view a ministry’s actions? In Mathew chapters 24 and 25, Jesus shares parables about his followers’ responsibilities. Soon he would be apart from them. These final words were important. As caretakers of the kingdom, they needed to be right-hearted.

Enormous amounts of wealth were given by a landowner to his servants for investment purposes. When the landowner returned, he expected there would be a return on investment. One servant did well. Another did half of what the successful one did. The third just buried the gold. He didn’t even get interest from the bank. Jesus spoke of success based on the servants’ actions. While one received high marks for a multiplied return, another was shown to the door and sent away. So, was this parable about action or faith? Jesus’ parables were never simple.

I believe the lesson here involves both faith and the resulting actions. Two took a risk, representing a path of faithful, calculated action. The other servant, driven by fear, failed the test. And indeed the master was displeased with him, not only for losing the principal investment, but also for failing to invest it at all. The fault was in his heart first. The action was merely a result.

I advise ministries to never confuse action with outcome. Don’t just be busy about the Master’s work. The Master measures both the heart and the results of wise investing. Faith births action. Without faith, pleasing our Master is impossible. But clearly, outcomes are not to be ignored.

For 20 years I’ve worked with leaders and field workers of the Jesus Film Project®. Their goal is to provide the “JESUS” film in the language each community understands best, so they can understand who Jesus is and have an opportunity to decide to follow him. This is a very broad goal, and its measurement is challenging. To date, the film has been dubbed into more than 1,500 languages. It’s the most translated film in history! But is it doing anything beyond sharing the story? Telling the story is good. Waiting in faith for results and then counting and thanking God for his blessing must not be lost.

Is this a cause worth the investment of so many? To discover the truth, the MacLellan Foundation hired Dr. Jim Engle to research the impact of this ministry’s global work. Dr. Engle firmly believed, “Mass media informs. It does not transform.” What the Jesus Film Project wanted was *transformation*. They cared about how many people view the film. Billions have seen it. And they paid careful attention to every person’s decision after seeing the film. More than 200 million have said they wanted to become followers after seeing this movie.

Dr. Engle began his research by identifying villages where the film was shown. They knew who responded to the invitation, but was there transformation? A year later, the researchers returned to selected villages in Africa and India. They didn’t ask the new believers any questions. They asked their neighbors! What better way to discover if anything changed following the viewing of the film?

The results? The research proved the film had indeed had a transformational impact. It was the neighbors who confirmed

this fact in village after village. They saw that levels of violence, drinking and immoral behavior had dramatically dropped. Something profound had happened to their neighbors who decided to become Christ-followers.

Dr. Engle reported to Jesus Film Project’s board and the MacLellan Foundation that while he would continue to believe that mass media informs, there could be no denying lives had been transformed in amazing ways. This was the work of God’s Spirit, working through a film.

In Jesus’ parable, he didn’t mention the specific activities of the gold talent investors. He did measure the results. It was important. Although not specifically mentioned, there’s plenty in the story to indicate the importance of attitude, too. One could speculate the servant who failed may have had an ulterior motive. Maybe he cared more about his own safety and welfare than about pleasing the master. The attitude of the heart pushes toward action or inaction. The result can be lively or deadly.

A *coat of business-mindedness* could be hiding a person or ministry of diminished faith. But it would be unwise to assume this. I once interviewed the CFO of a large ministry, asking about the heart of the ministry and how it related to his work so far from the field. He was bright, faithful and a solid steward of the organization’s resources. And before the interview was over, he was wiping away tears, talking about the transformation taking place in the countries where they ministered.

Likewise, a *cloak of faithful intentions* could be hiding a lack of fiscal and even spiritual accountability. Saying all the right words about the plans and expectations of God’s blessing could be a way of avoiding a discussion about the wisdom of a particular plan or strategy that is failing. This, too, cannot be assumed simply because of a leader’s expression of faith and trust in a God of miracles.

The dynamic tension between outcomes and the faithful execution of plans is about more than just our desired results. It also serves to show us our own weaknesses. It drives us to be more strategic and deliberate. But even more, it is a measurement of faith, risk-taking, careful execution of plans and our willingness to evaluate the value of a ministry’s actions.

The tension serves us well. It calls us to evaluate our motives. It helps us share the joy of serving God with others. And it requires us to increase our ability to forgive and accommodate our sisters and brothers in ministry, even if they dress differently. ●

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**JOE CLASS** is founder and CEO of Contexture International in Irvine, Calif. Contexture staff have the joy of serving those who change the world through faith and strategic thinking ([contextureintl.com](http://contextureintl.com)).

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# 5 TOP DIGITAL STRATEGIES: TRENDS YOU CAN'T IGNORE

By Lindsey Lind

WORKING AT AN AD AGENCY, I use the word *fun* often throughout the day. In relationships with our team, clients and with God who creates all things, we find joy in connecting, and a bit of fun with the work we do. Digital marketing adds to this fun by giving us a new set of tools to solve old problems.

## THE CHALLENGE

How do you get new donors to notice the work your ministry is doing and become a partner in this work alongside you? The contest for your donor's attention is real. Every day they are bombarded by brand messages from thousands of companies, nonprofits and churches, all trying to get their attention.

As Christians, we are not in competition with one another for God's favor or blessings. (Thanks be to God!) However, standing out and being noticed in our ever-preoccupied world does take intentionality and perseverance.

I believe the *fun* new digital strategies discussed below will substantially aid you in the contest for attention. No one is an expert in all areas of digital marketing. The arena is vast and covers many different tools and channels. It also changes so quickly that mastery is unattainable.

You can be a champion for your ministry by bringing new, powerful strategies into the game. My hope is that the list below will get your wheels turning. From there, use online resources, trusted partners and geeky digital folks to help implement and test the strategies. Get ready for a light bulb moment!

## TOP 5 DIGITAL STRATEGIES FOR 2017

### 1. Use the Facebook Audience Network to drive awareness and traffic.

► **Facebook Audience Network (FAN)** is a collection of sites and apps where Facebook advertisers can serve ads using the same targeting and measurement tools that they use on Facebook.

#### Why this matters

Facebook recently announced a new addition to its audience network: Amazon.com. This partnership has huge implications for the industry. The combination of the largest social media platform and the largest U.S. online retailer opens numerous possibilities for digital marketers.

Facebook's advertising platform is used for more than just growing the fans on your page or boosting content. It can be used as a powerful digital acquisition tool to drive new potential donors to your organization and increase income from first-time donors. The cost of traditional acquisition methods continues to become more expensive with lower returns.

The need for top funnel strategies to bring in new donors to your ministry has never been more important. Let Facebook ads drive awareness for your brand and help persuade others of the importance of your cause.

Now having added Amazon.com to the mix... bring on the 4th quarter!

## 2. Invest in content marketing to drive ministry resources with Google Grants.

- ▶ **Google Ad Grants** is a donation program that distributes free in-kind advertising to 501(c)(3) nonprofits. Participating nonprofit organizations are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 per month in in-kind advertising within the AdWords search engine marketing platform.

### Why this matters

Google now allows grant users to add multiple domains owned by the nonprofit to their account. This is significant because it allows you to promote resources, blog posts or other content on separate websites to increase your ministry's exposure. It's a unique acquisition opportunity that drives attention to content you have to share with the world, not just your primary website.

## 3. Optimize your website by using heat maps to better understand what motivates someone to act.

- ▶ **Heat map software** creates a representation of user data in the form of a map or diagram in which data values are represented as colors laid over the pages of a website. The data is a compilation of user's interactions with the website's interface and allows you to visualize the experiences of multiple users.

### Why this matters

Websites are commonly the most challenging aspect of digital marketing for ministries to manage. They are costly to create, time consuming to update, and a great source of frustration when wanting more out of the site than how it currently functions.

An effective ministry website evokes intentional emotions from the users as a way of sharing in the experience of your ministry. From sadness or outrage, to joy or excitement, the images and messaging on your site take users on a journey through the heart of your ministry and into actions they can take to join with you.

Looking through this lens, you can see why knowing how users interact with your website becomes so fundamental. Interacting with heat maps allows you to take actionable steps to optimize your website beyond basic engagement metrics.

## 4. Segment your e-mail campaigns by user's engagement. Who makes up your engagement levels?

- **Active:** Last opened or clicked on one of your e-mails in the past 30 days
- **Engaged:** Last opened or clicked on one of your e-mails between 30 to 90 days ago
- **Unengaged:** Last opened or clicked on one of your e-mails between 90 to 180 days ago
- **Dormant:** Last opened or clicked on one of your e-mails between 180 days to 12 months ago

- **Zombies:** Last opened or clicked on one of your e-mails more than 12 months ago
- **Ghosts:** Never opened or clicked on any of your e-mails and signed up over 12 months ago

### Why this matters

Segmenting allows your subscribers to decide how they want to be communicated with. Segment your e-mails by how often they open an e-mail and you will be surprised to see the number of subscribers who never or rarely engage with your e-mails.

E-mail marketing is one of the most cost-effective marketing channels available, and it's also widely recognized in our industry for having a considerably high ROI.

The permission to communicate with your supporters through e-mail is a delicate agreement that is easily severed by clicking the unsubscribe button.

By using engagement to determine which e-mails a subscriber receives, you increase your delivery rate, but more importantly you respect those who respected you enough to share their e-mail address. Also, knowing how many subscribers you have in each engagement level allows you to build specific strategies for the different levels. Segmentation strategies allow you to bring the unengaged or dormant subscribers back to active and clean up the zombies and ghosts who are adding deadweight to your file.

## 5. Treat mobile users differently on your donation forms.

### Why this matters?

The evolution of web design has delivered us into the responsive design age.

However, mobile users should not always be treated equally. This is especially true with donation forms (or other call-to-action forms) on your website.

Completing a donation, signing up to volunteer or registering for an event on a screen that is only 3 inches wide is a very different experience than using a full-sized keyboard and screen. The fewer fields you require a mobile user to fill in, the higher completion rate you will have on the form.

It is highly suggested that on a mobile donation form a donor be allowed to complete a donation with as little information as just their name, e-mail address, zip code and credit card information. Although your donor processing department may not be pleased, the less information that is required, the more transactions you will receive. Consider reviewing your current forms to see which fields you can streamline and/or remove from the mobile version.

## DON'T WAIT!

So, there you have it: the Top 5 Digital Strategies for 2017. Don't wait to find new and better ways to connect with donors. Create in your ministry a way to embrace the new cutting-edge tools and strategies that exist. It starts with you! ●

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**LINDSEY LIND** serves as the vice president of digital at Oneicity (oneicity.com). She works with ministries to create online income through fun digital campaigns that expand the bond of existing donors and captivate new ones.

# Telling Your Story

It's the secret to high-impact PR.

By Mendy Nestor

MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE that public relations is a combination of writing press releases and putting out fires. While those components are vital, they are not the most important or the most impactful elements of PR. The most important element of public relations is the “relations” portion. As PR professionals, it is our responsibility to relate to our constituents in a real and transformative way. By effectively telling your organization’s story, you are able to bring your good work into the homes of those people you hope to reach.

When thinking of storytelling, we may be transported back to our childhood where fables and nursery rhymes fill our heads. Or, maybe when you hear the word “storytelling,” it brings an assumption that it involves some embellished account of the facts or even a flat-out lie. But that isn’t it at all. Storytelling is important in your organization, ministry or nonprofit because, at its core, it is simply telling your own personal story. And no one is able to tell your story in quite the same way, or with the same authenticity, as you.

Michael Margolis, founder and CEO of GetStoried.com said, “Storytelling is about connecting to other people and helping people to see what you see.” It sounds simple. No one knows us the way we know ourselves, right? But there are a lot of practical and strategic steps that need to be taken for effective storytelling that both honors your mission and furthers your organizational goals.

Here are a few tips to get you started in crafting and distributing an impactful and effective story for your organization.

## 1. DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE

There is nothing worse than not having a good grasp of who you are. You might wonder what your brand, or identity, has to do with storytelling. It has *everything* to do with storytelling. Stories need to be honest and engaging. And if you don’t have a good grasp of who you are and where you are going, your readers/consumers will see right through it.

In your writing, specifically, there are a few exercises you can conduct internally to determine how your organization will speak through writing, moving forward. Use the following exercise to ask yourself who you are and how you want to be portrayed. Take the four points listed below and list multiple terms that best describe your organization when it comes to:

- **Tone:** Are you excitable, stoic, hip or traditional? What is the vibe you want to put out?
- **Character:** Does integrity, generosity, selflessness or confidence define you?
- **Language:** Do you sound scholarly and proper? Are you conversational? Do you use contractions?
- **Purpose:** What do you want to do through this visibility? Educate? Sell? Engage?

Great stories  
create interest,  
affection and  
intrigue for your  
organization.

PHOTO BY GLEN NOBLE, UNSPLASH.COM

# y Well

Brainstorm as many words as you feel appropriate and narrow them down to the ones that most aptly describe you. Once you have your terms, develop the voice of a persona or an actual person that best embodies all of these things. It can be the president of your organization, a celebrity or even a character in a movie. Just be sure that everyone who writes content for you is comfortable in writing in that voice. This will go a long way in keeping your voice consistent through all platforms.

## 2. CRAFT YOUR STORY

Now that you have a clear understanding of who you are, it is time to start developing your story. Having a full understanding of your purpose will help in guiding the direction.

Transparency is vital in your writing. People are smart and will be able to see through embellishments or hiding truths. Before you put yourself out there, be sure you're prepared to truly expose yourself.

Next, identify something compelling that distinguishes your organization. The story does not have to be a tear jerker to be compelling. A Feb. 23, 2017, article by Jacopo Prisco on CNN.com, "Why UPS trucks (almost) never turn left," is a great example of just such a story. It shares that UPS "saves millions of gallons of fuel each year, and avoids emissions equivalent to over 20,000 passenger cars." All of this for one small, simple change in a directive to their drivers: Don't make a left turn unless absolutely necessary.

It may sound like a trivial point, but the company has done this for decades and the original story from 2014 has resurfaced again because of its simple ingenuity. Avoiding left turns doesn't exactly pull at the heartstrings, but this story certainly qualifies as attention-grabbing and compelling.

### Before getting started on your story, ask yourself:

- Does your story have a beginning, middle and end?
- What is your conflict that needs to be resolved?
- Possibly the most important factor, however, is answering the question "who is your hero?" Every good story has someone who saves the day.
- Do you have anything to supplement your story? Photos and videos are the most impactful, but personal testimonies are also effective.

## 3. WHAT NOW?

Now that you have written your story, the work is not over. A great story means nothing if no one hears it.

- **Identify the audience you want to reach.** This may be a story only meant for your devoted supporters, but it could be a story with potential to bring in an entirely new group of



backers. If you aren't specific in who you want to reach, you may miss hitting anyone of significant meaning.

- **Which channels are most appropriate for this audience?**

If you are hoping to reach a Millennial audience, then direct mail is probably not the answer. So ask yourself which channels are available to you and which best fits the audience you intend to reach.

- **The right timing is imperative.** The perfect, engaging story, sent directly to all of the right people will still be ineffective if no one is paying attention. For example, during the 2016 presidential election, it seemed as if no one was paying attention to anything other than the election. A great story would have had to work hard to break through the noise. Don't handicap yourself before you begin.

- **Finally, what is your takeaway?** What is it that you hope to accomplish through your storytelling? If your only goal, for example, is to increase your bottom line, your story will probably miss its mark. Of course, increased revenue is always an ultimate goal, but it should not be the driving force behind your story.

Great stories create interest, affection and intrigue for your organization. It is up to you to build trust that eventually brings in financial support. The specific goal for storytelling through public relations is different for each organization. Raising awareness among your constituents and those likely to start supporting your organization is imperative.

When it comes to storytelling, the greatest chance to make a large impact is by earning the third party validation that the media affords. If a media outlet picks up the story you have told, they are doing so because they trust your transparency and intent. When the media runs your own story, not only is the reach much greater, but the trust in your organization or product is infinitely greater.

Stories have been around since time began. Today, if you tell your story in the right way, you will bridge cultural, socioeconomic and generational divides. That's because stories impact the human heart. As President Abraham Lincoln reminded us: "In order to win a man to your cause, you must first reach his heart, the great high road to his reason." ●

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# Measuring Digital Impact



Your key performance indicators matter.

By Bill Wachel

**HOW DO I DO MORE AND MORE IN LIFE?** Many people are driven to accomplish larger numbers of activities each day. We want to track our number of steps (and let our friends know) while keeping our e-mail and text messages and calendars close by as we do more.

The Consumer Technology Association reports that the total wearables market, driven by the popularity of fitness trackers, is expected to reach 48 million unit sales (a 14 percent increase) and earn \$5.5 billion in revenue (a 3 percent increase) in 2017.

Hootsuite reports that there are 3.7 billion users of the Internet, almost half of the world's population. And 2.5 billion people are active users of social media. We have become a measurement-focused society using technology across all aspects of our lives. And yet, many ministries are not measuring their digital impact.

## WHY MEASURE?

Passion often drives success, whether in pursuing our favorite hobby or a new corporate initiative. And passion is driven by an understanding of why we are undertaking an activity, like the exercise and relaxation I feel after a long road bike ride. I know the hard work pedaling, even uphill, will result in a great post-ride exuberation!

Helping your team know the purpose behind digital metrics allows them to more effectively support and implement the metrics.

Soft reasons to measure stir our spirit, while more concrete “businesslike” reasons define the results of measuring. Vince Lombardi, coach of the Green Bay Packers said, “The measure of who we are is what we do with what we have.” Corrie Ten Boom noted, “The measure of a life, after all, is not its duration but its donation.” Both are reminders that life is about giving, including our time in the office.

Gordon Bethune, a former CEO of Continental Airlines who turned around the airline to win more J.D. Power and Associates awards for customer satisfaction than any other airline, said during the change, “What you measure and reward is what you are going to get.” Author John Hayes noted, “We tend to overvalue the things we can measure and undervalue the things we cannot.” This is a compelling reminder that we need to measure the right things.

## WHAT MATTERS MOST: KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

Effective digital impact measurements start with effective operational measurements. Has your organization defined success? Establishing definitive metrics is usually much harder to do than it sounds, for reasons such as the following:

- **There are multiple parties involved, each with differing points of view.** Ministry recipients, donors, ministry partners, key management and employees may all have a different definition of success.

- **The organization’s culture may or may not support measurements.** Loyalty may be valued over individual performance. There may be no appetite for what true metrics tells you.
- **The availability and clarity of information influences the ease of measurement.** Organizations can stumble around definitions. For example, does gospel sharing occur and become counted when a gospel tract is handed out? Or only when the tract is read? Is a new contact created when a name is provided? Or only when both a name and e-mail address are provided, allowing follow up?

You can often identify a success-focused group by what’s on the group’s website. The organization Faith Comes By Hearing notes their mission: “God’s Word for Every Person” and metrics: “offering hope to 6 billion people through Bible recordings in 1,074 languages.”

Another organization, Every Home For Christ, offers both a clear purpose: “Every Home for Christ exists to serve the Church to reach every home on earth with the Gospel,” and clear performance metrics: homes reached (311,000 per day); people who have responded (52,000 per day); and Christ groups planted (76 per day).

“Cru,” formerly Campus Crusade for Christ, presents numbers across multiple ministries, including 6.5 billion exposures to the gospel through The Jesus Film; 2,400 campus ministries involving over 82,000 students, and athletic outreaches that touch over 100 million people annually.

### DIGITAL METRICS: MANY CHOICES

There are many facets of measuring digital activities. The Digital Branding Institute suggests three components: *Identity*, which allows your audience to build a memory structure

around who you are and what value you have to offer; *Visibility*, indicating how your target audience will find you; and *Credibility*, what your audience thinks of you.

Technopedia provides four cornerstones of digital influence: *Reach*, how far your information will travel across the social continuum; *Relevance*, your alignment to interests of the moment; *Resonance*, the ripple effect of your information and how long a conversational thread will remain topical coupled with how many people feel compelled to offer their opinion on the matter; and *Impact*, how you contribute to some sort of change or effect.

### DIGITAL TIED TO OPERATIONAL

The vision of Global Media Outreach (GMO) is to “*Share* Jesus with the World; *Grow* People in their Faith; and *Connect* People to Christian communities.” We have defined digital impact for Global Media Outreach to be directly related to our operational impact measurements. In other words, for each dollar spent on Internet based advertising, how many additional gospel visits, indicated decisions and discipleship activities occur?

Since our founding in 2004, Global Media Outreach has facilitated over 1.6 billion presentations of the gospel and over 176 million indicated decisions for Christ. We use a six-step model for reaching people for Christ:

- 1. Seekers:** Attract seekers around the world, using Internet-based advertisements themed around human needs such as relationship issues, job loss, cancer and other health challenges; etc.
- 2. Present gospel:** After clicking an ad or search URL, seekers are directed to one of over 100 websites with a gospel presentation.



**3. Decision:** Seekers can indicate a decision for Christ after viewing the gospel presentation and provide their contact information.

**4. Disciple:** Over 4,000 online missionaries worldwide minister to the seekers via Global Media Outreach's online messaging technology and provide spiritual content to aid the seeker in their walk with Christ.

**5. Connect:** The online missionary connects the seeker/new believer with a Christian community.

**6. Share Faith:** Ultimately, the new believer shares their faith with others, leading to more new believers.

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI) DASHBOARDS

At Global Media Outreach, we measure a number of activities all aimed at driving a higher digital impact. In our Internet-based advertising, some of the measurements we look at include:

- Number of seekers clicking on an advertisement
- Targeted languages and locations
- Dimensions/size of advertisement
- Key words selected to place the advertisement
- Advertising costs

Within our seeker community, we look at which e-mail topics and content have the largest open rates and readership. In our online missionary community, we monitor how much time passes before an online missionary responds to a seeker message and how many messages an online missionary is responding to per day. Additional metrics provide insights on social media reach across Facebook, WeChat and other platforms.

Knowing that our team responds better to visuals, we selected Tableau, a business intelligence (BI) tool, to package and present our key performance indicators. There are many different BI tools available. Tableau offered "built in" data interfaces with over 50 different data sources, including Google's Web Analytics, and has been a leader in industry ratings for five years.

### METRICS DRIVEN ACTIONS

At Global Media Outreach, our KPIs are displayed in bar graphs, data tables, scatter plots, pie charts and other formats, with the choice of format based on what best tells "the story" of the information. Our KPI dashboards drive operational performance.

We take action to tune advertising content based on click rates, align online missionaries based on seeker numbers by language,



Translation: Learn how to pray.



Translation: Do you want to have more faith?



Translation: You don't know what to do? God wants to guide you...

and undertake numerous other actions based on metrics. For example, the two advertisements above drove very different "activity rates."

### YOUR NEXT STEPS

How do you transform your organization's digital environment and metrics? McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm, identified key decisions for implementing a digital transformation, including the following:

- **Discover:** Set the ambition for the business; identify where the business should go.
- **Design:** Create a plan for the digital transformation, addressing who will lead the effort, how to sell the vision to key stakeholders and how far the digital efforts will go (e.g. where to position in the digital ecosystem).
- **Deliver:** Execute the plan, allowing for ongoing adaptation and adjustment; know how to allocate funds rapidly and dynamically.

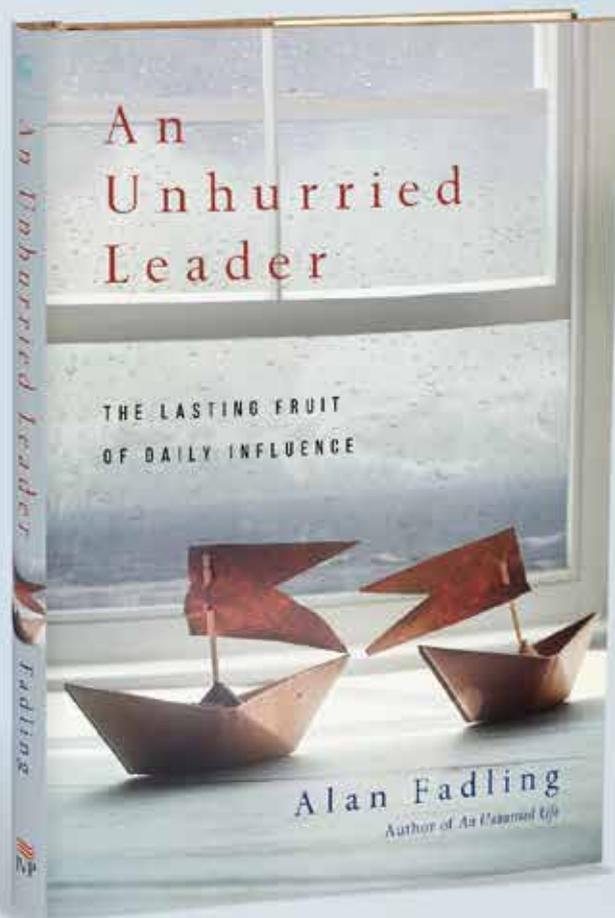
As you move forward to build or enhance your organization's digital KPI metrics, be sure to leverage your experiences by:

- a) Clearly identifying your organization's operational purpose
- b) Knowing which measurements best represent success in that purpose
- c) Validating that all stakeholders are executing towards the same goal line of success
- d) Understanding what potential actions you will complete based on probable observations the metrics will tell you

I hope these insights will help you to build your organization's key performance indicator dashboard. Measuring your digital impact matters, and it's absolutely critical to your organization's success in today's rapidly accelerating ministry environment. ●

**BILL WACHEL** is the chief information officer for Global Media Outreach. His work focuses on serving GMO's online missionaries and staff and providing technology solutions that help seekers around the world learn of God's love and grace. Learn more at ([greatcommission2020.com](http://greatcommission2020.com)) and ([globalmediaoutreach.com](http://globalmediaoutreach.com)).

# LET JESUS SET *the* PACE



Alan Fadling, author of *An Unhurried Life*, returns to unfold what it means for you to let Jesus set the pace as you lead your church, your work, or your family. This new view of kingdom leadership might just transform the whole of your life into a more livable and fruitful pace.

“Alan set out to offer an inspiring vision of leadership that is less hurried and more fruitful, less hectic and more joyful—and that he did. With the biblical text as his consistent backdrop, each principle, practice, and suggested reflection creates a unique mosaic for every spiritual leader desirous of living an abundant life.”

—STEPHEN A. MACCHIA, founder and president of Leadership Transformations

# LinkedIn and Connected

## Digital relationships and kingdom momentum

*"I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (John 17:26)*

**THE NOTION OF BEING KNOWN** by a friend or colleague has transformed over the past decade due to the explosion of digital media and online social platforms. Years ago, we would have interacted with these individuals in real life. Today, we "friend," "follow" and "link" to people whom we have never met. Many of us go on to develop strong relationships with these virtual personalities.

LinkedIn is the largest professional social networking platform in the world, with nearly 470 million members. Every day, people access LinkedIn to share their personal and corporate brand online. They develop relationships by using LinkedIn's powerful search function to discover targeted individuals with whom to communicate. They search for positions, content and answers to questions. And they market their products and services online. All of these activities begin with the powerful notion of story. Sharing the story of what makes you unique and worth connecting to is the critical starter fluid for building relationships.

Well-crafted stories offer lifelines that cause a reaction deep within us. They contain an element that catches our attention and makes us want to know more. Look deeply into your ministry efforts and search for stories that will cause someone to stop, take notice and act to help fulfill the mission of your organization.

To effectively use the LinkedIn platform, one must begin by reaching the "All-Star" profile level signifying a completed profile. A complete profile trips the LinkedIn algorithm in a positive way and assists in bumping up your profile in search results. We all want to be discovered, especially if we have a powerful product, service or ministry message to share.

In addition to being complete, your LinkedIn profile needs to be optimized for search engines by adding pertinent key words to five critical areas: Name, Headline, Summary Statement, Experience Titles and Skills.

The Summary Statement allows you to tell your story in 2,000 characters. This space is critical to sharing the message of your personal brand. I like to describe it as a digital billboard. It's the spot just below your photo, general information and headline and one of the first content pieces that someone will see when they view your profile.

How you craft those critical characters will be key to whether someone wants to engage further with your brand. What is your ministry message or area of expertise? What are you passionate about? What skills, experience, life lessons and education do you

bring to the table? Why should someone stop to "listen" to and or connect with you?

Simon Sinek, in his 2010 TED Talk "How Great Leaders Inspire Action" said: "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. If you talk about what you believe, you will attract those who believe what you believe."

Sharing your story centers around expressing your authentic self. LinkedIn offers rich media options to help to more deeply share what you believe in. Photos, SlideShare presentations, videos, documents and more can all be showcased on your LinkedIn Profile. These digital media content pieces work together to showcase your brand story.

Once you have crafted your profile and optimized it for search, the next critical step to connecting with your target audience is developing a content marketing plan. You can provide segments of your ministry story via branded content that can be shared in a LinkedIn update to the public or to your connections. You can take it a step further and create an article that can be published on the LinkedIn blogging platform. Articles posted there that garner a large amount of engagement (likes, comments, shares) can get lifted and shared to a wider portion of the 470-million-member LinkedIn base than your current connections and network.

LinkedIn can help you share your ministry story, develop relationships with stakeholders and find critical resources. Those connections begin with a story. What's yours? You can find me on LinkedIn at ([linkedin.com/in/michellebeckhamcorbin](https://www.linkedin.com/in/michellebeckhamcorbin)). I'd like to know more about the power of your ministry brand and how God is working through you to build his kingdom. ●

**MICHELLE BECKHAM-CORBIN**, MBA, is marketing director for American Heritage Girls, Inc., the premier faith-based national character development organization for girls ages 5 to 18 ([americanheritagegirls.org](https://www.americanheritagegirls.org)).

Michelle began her career in marketing at Procter & Gamble and later founded digital media firm, C3. Creating Connections Consulting, LLC. She is a frequent speaker, trainer and published writer.





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# Connecting in a Distracted Age

## Communications priorities for today's leader

**WE'RE LIVING IN THE MOST DISTRACTED AGE IN HISTORY.** You probably won't be surprised to know that studies reveal the average person is bombarded with about 5,000 media messages every day. The typical adult checks his or her mobile phone about 110 times a day, and even middle school kids check their phones up to 85 times each day!

Beyond our digital devices, we live in a world where the average home has a TV turned on more than 8 hours a day. So between the competition from computers, mobile devices, radio, TV and more, it's easy to see why your message is falling on deaf ears. In fact, it's no surprise that our mission and message continue to lose influence in a culture where so many competing voices are fighting for attention.

But as I discuss in my book, *Unique: Telling Your Story in the Age of Brands and Social Media* (Regal, 2012), one of the greatest challenges we face is that for most of us, we're simply not telling our story well. Never forget that in today's digital world, *how* we tell our story is just as important as the story we tell. After all, no matter how great our message or work, if nobody's listening, we've failed.

So considering the communication opportunities and challenges we face today, here's a list of priorities you should be thinking about:

### 1. Your website is now "home base" for all your communication.

Remember, you don't actually own your Facebook page, Twitter feed, YouTube channel or Instagram account. While social media matters, each of those platforms can be taken away in an instant. The one piece of digital real estate you do own is your website. And because it can house videos, your live stream, a blog, an online store and much more, it's far more important than you think.

Plus, in my experience, virtually 100 percent of potential new visitors or donors will check out your website before visiting or giving. When you think about that, your website could be the most important thing you own!

**2. Rethink your logo.** First of all, a logo isn't your brand; it's the visual expression of your brand story. Maybe your perception and "brand" are fine, and it's just time to update

the logo. On the other hand, it may be time to reconsider what that logo represents. Either way, in a distracted world where studies show most people make decisions within eight seconds, your logo may be your only opportunity to connect, so make it count!

**3. The digital mission field.** By population, Facebook is now the largest country in the world. Think about that for a minute. The question is: Who's sending missionaries to that country? Who's planting churches in that country? I would suggest it's time to stop thinking about "missions" just in *geographical* terms, and start thinking about missions in *digital* terms. The online world is the mission field of the future.

**4. Live streaming.** Pastors, it's time to move past the fear that by live streaming your worship service, your congregation will stay at home instead of showing up at church. Nothing could be further from the truth. At our media company — Cooke Pictures in Los Angeles — we work with churches that have not only experienced local growth because of their live stream, but those live stream audiences financially support the church. One pastor called me recently to tell me his live stream audience actually gave more financially one Sunday than his local, 6,000 member congregation! And if that's not enough, we've discovered that a significant segment of your live stream viewers are international.

**5. Invest in your communications team.** Whatever your story, cause or work, it's their job to take that message to the world. A team that understands how to communicate in today's distracted culture is more important than ever.

The digital world has changed everything about how we communicate our message. That's why it's so important to step back and rethink how we connect in today's distracted and disrupted age.

When you study the life of Jesus, you discover he spent his life where the people were. In those days it was the temple court, the marketplace or social gatherings like weddings. Today, the people are gathering online, and if we're going to impact the culture, that's where we need to be. ●

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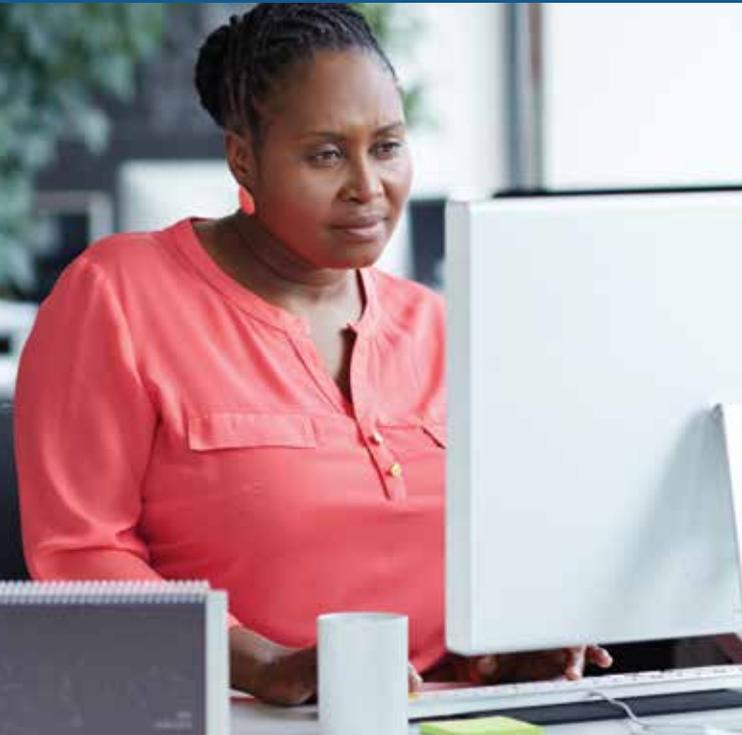
**PHIL COOKE, PH.D.**, is a media producer and consultant to many of the most effective churches, ministries and nonprofits in the world. His company website is ([cookepictures.com](http://cookepictures.com)), and he blogs at ([philcooke.com](http://philcooke.com)).





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# Creating Media That Matters

## How visual content can transform your ministry

THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE IS CHANGING more rapidly than ever before. In a market saturated with content, it can be difficult not only to stand out, but also to make a lasting impact. Creating powerful, engaging media can help you reach your audience like you never could have before. It's time to create media that matters... media that elicits a response. Engage people in an emotional, gripping and compelling manner.

### THREE PRINCIPLES TO ELICIT A RESPONSE AND ACCELERATE YOUR MISSION

#### 1. Engage emotionally.

You only have a moment to capture someone's attention. Both the story and the visual content need to connect emotionally. When a compelling need is supported with captivating images, it will contribute to drawing people into your story.

A beautifully shot cinematic film or photography will stun you with its beauty. The combination of well-framed shots and perfect music can make ordinary things look spectacular. A well-written script will capture your attention and leave you riveted. The goal is to trigger a response.

#### 2. Use a simple message.

It's important to present a single, clear message. A surprising twist or angle can help to accentuate that message. There needs to be focus and simplicity in the story. A message is most memorable when wording is minimal, substantial, and easy to understand.

Help people see that you have the solution. Keep it short. Make it simple and compelling.

Think about the one thing you want people to do. They are busy and really don't care what you create unless it looks interesting enough to make them click.

#### 3. Call people to action.

Effective media needs to have a clear call to action. People need to be brought to a place where they will make the decision you want them to make. It's helpful to have a single action in mind that is woven into the architecture of the video.

Keep your goal and objective as the focal point throughout the entire piece. Ensure that the call to action is clear and that your audience knows exactly what to do. Don't be afraid to repeat it!

### SIX STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONTENT CAMPAIGN

Take a campaign approach when adding content to your social media and website. This will help you create a plan and measurable goals, which will make your content more engaging and help accelerate your mission.

**1. Embrace your opportunity.** Start by defining the problem you need to solve. Determine what you will need and when you need it by. Clearly outline your desired outcome.

**2. Define your audience.** As you begin to determine who is in need of the product, program or solution you offer, it will be clear there are some distinct characteristics and demographics of the people you are targeting. Note the age, gender, interests, categories and careers, and watch a persona take shape. Then connect your message with that person.

**3. Appeal to your consumer's interest.** Once you have determined the interests, passions and things your desired consumer loves, begin to think about how you could appeal to them. Set personal tastes aside. Use relevant and compelling design, imagery and words that get attention.

**4. Evoke a sensory reaction.** Use powerful media and imagery to create your advertising and marketing materials. Use close-up images of eyes, faces, engaging music and emotionally compelling footage that captures attention.

**5. Elicit a response.** If there is only one action you would want your potential audience to take, what is it? When you boost your ad and promote your product, keep in mind that goal.

**6. Listen and learn forward.** Review results while your campaign is underway. Don't be afraid to experiment and try new things. Pay attention to the statistics so you can see what is working.

People are seeking solutions to their problems. Be their solution. If they see you are the answer, you won't have to convince them. They will come to you. ●

**KAREN SCHENK** has been an innovative leader in the media industry for 20 years. Karen and her team specialize in equipping organizations to create and facilitate responsive media that brings about transformation. She is the Owner/CEO of Iconium Media, an international marketing, film and website company. Learn more at (Iconium.io) or by e-mail at (info@iconium.io).



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# Asking Strategic Questions

When innovation becomes your best choice

**DIGITAL INNOVATION CAN BE SIMPLE** and inexpensive. You can start without knowing all of the answers. Ask a lot of questions. Try things and make adjustments. For our team, innovating became the strategy we needed to help us connect more effectively with our audience.

We manage a website and an e-newsletter for Cru staff women. Cru is a caring community of people who are passionate about connecting others to Christ.

Two years ago, my predecessor showed me how she created our PDF newsletter, and then posted it on our website. Afterward, she manually sent a link to our subscribers, 200 e-mails at a time, using our Gmail account. Because Gmail locked the account after 2,000 e-mails, sending the newsletter turned into a multiday process.

Certainly, there had to be a more efficient way. I wanted to innovate, but I didn't know how. So, I asked lots of questions. And I listened to the answers before I made decisions.

## What's causing the most pain right now?

Sending an e-newsletter has always been a successful way for us to communicate with Cru staff women. Every quarter our newsletter shows up in their inboxes and points them to our website filled with helpful content they can access anytime. But we didn't have to continue delivering the newsletter manually. I investigated options.

## Can technology relieve the pain?

At first, I was told automation wouldn't work. To protect the security of staff women living in dangerous locations around the world, we chose not to turn our list over to a third-party service who would store our information in a cloud somewhere.

Fair enough. No one wants to endanger anyone else's life. However, our organization sends out monthly e-mails to a list larger than ours. How do they do it? Who are they trusting?

When I asked our technology team what they thought, they suggested MailChimp. "But what about security?" Our technology team used MailChimp features to add an extra layer of security, and their precautions seemed reasonable to me.

## How much will this cost?

Because our digital team folded our list into their license, they now pay for our subscription, saving us hundreds of dollars per year. Even though we didn't pay a financial cost, we counted the human cost. Our team, including me, didn't have the technical know-how to make this change by ourselves. We helped each other through the learning curve.

## How will we make this change?

Our digital team helped us set up our account and organize our list. They also showed us how to create a template and send our first campaign (what MailChimp calls each issue of the newsletter). Our team members caught on immediately. What a relief.

We chose content, designed our first campaign and sent it. In a single issue, we cut our man hours so dramatically that we decided to publish bimonthly instead of quarterly. That led us to ask our next question.

## Is it working for our audience?

Our new format worked for our audience. Both our open and click rates are now twice the industry average. Our readers now see a photo of the author, a headline, a byline and some teaser text. Because we raised their curiosity level, our website traffic has increased significantly.

## Is it working for our team?

Yes, it's working, but there has been a learning curve. Because we use MailChimp, we have had to make sure all of our content is live on the website so we can link to it when we send the newsletter. We are now figuring out how to create steady streams of content for the website so we can pick which pieces we want to feature in the newsletter. As we've made this shift, sometimes we have had to publish multiple pieces on the same day so we could include links to those pieces in the newsletter. The industry calls that dumping. We're trying not to do that anymore.

As our team continues to solve the challenges of using MailChimp, it's time to ask the same set of questions again. Innovation doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. For us, it provided a successful strategy to better connect us with our audience. ●

**ANNE MARIE WINZ** lives in Orlando, Fla., and manages [globalstaffwomen.com](http://globalstaffwomen.com), a website that connects, encourages and resources Cru staff women around the world. She also manages [prayerforprodigals.com](http://prayerforprodigals.com), a prayer community for those who love someone making destructive choices. She and her husband, Mark, gladly travel to lead writers' training conferences. Learn more about Cru at [cru.org](http://cru.org).





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## 2017 CLA "Encore Series" Webcast (June 29)



*June 29 (12 p.m. ET) - Financial Management*

Presenter: **Bryan Taylor**, CFA, CEO, Cornerstone Management, Inc.

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# Vital Connections

## How relational alignment guides our leadership

AFTER 32 YEARS OF “WILDERNESS” TRAINING, I found myself entering the world of “full-time ministry.” Suddenly, I faced the challenge of applying in the church the leadership skills that I had often so brashly prescribed for it. Upon entering full-time ministry, I found that I had been transplanted into a new industry, a new culture and a new region.

In the wilderness of the business world, I had learned about the need for connecting with superiors and subordinates to achieve desired results but these were professional relationships that for the most part only mimicked the real thing. Like many of the alignments in our digital world today, these business relationships were simply “links,” not true connections. They provided access to needed resources without the cost or benefit of involvement.

Perhaps it was the shock of migrating to a new and different world at the “halftime” of my professional life that made me aware of the absolute need for connectedness. In this new world, I became fully aware of my need for mentors to help accelerate my effectiveness. I also realized the critical need for authentic connection with volunteers. The mission of the church is dependent on the effectiveness of volunteers, and the effectiveness of volunteers is dependent on their connectedness. That is my responsibility. I learned that nurturing these vital connections required more effort than I had typically invested in relationships.

Early in this phase of my journey, I made a new friend who is also a strong advocate for the application of leadership skills in the church — Keith Craft, founder and pastor of Elevate Life Church in Frisco, Texas. His book *Leadershipology 101* (Leadership Shapers, 2009) included the axiom: “New alignment, new assignment.”

Suddenly the previously unnoticed principle of relational alignments before assignments resonated with me as I looked back over my own personal journey. I saw that God had always used relationships to resource me for my assignments. A personal alignment had landed me my first job and my first ministry assignment. Subsequent connections had also proved pivotal to my effectiveness and career advancement. I realized that, while education and development of skills were essential, the greatest dimension of my personal growth had come through relationships.

Along the way, I have made a few important discoveries regarding relationships, connectedness and leadership:

1. Organizations provide structure for relationships, but connectedness is personal and can only be accomplished by individuals.
2. Authentic relationships frequently do not follow the organizational chart.
3. Without personal connectedness, relationships are sterile, but vibrant, life-filled connections release passion and synergy.
4. Establishing connectedness requires a significant investment of time, but its dividends are worthwhile and, as the connection grows stronger, smaller investments yield incrementally greater returns.

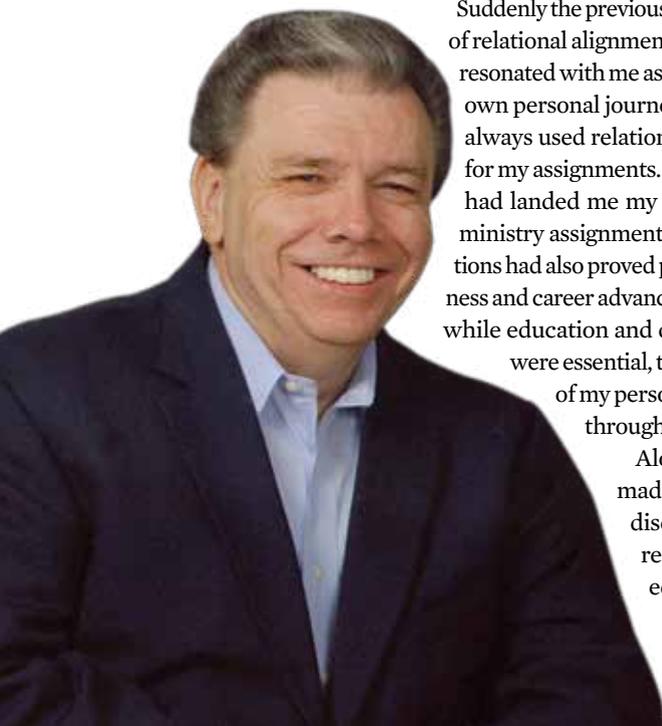
The volunteers whom I oversee function in various ministries of the church, in different locations and at different times during the week. While I have a close connection with the leaders I serve directly, I have also learned that it is also important to go where they are. I have found it important to connect with members of the volunteer teams on their turf, while they are fulfilling their volunteer roles. This communicates value and appreciation for them and their ministry role. I benefit because it helps me avoid casting a vision or launching a mission that is inappropriate or unrealistic. I benefit because the leaders serving with me gain greater confidence in my leadership.

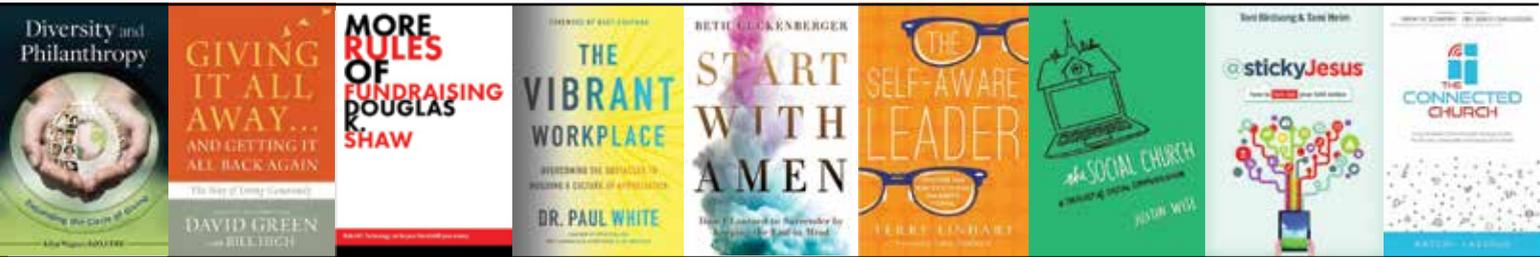
My big takeaway is that connectedness is vital to team effectiveness, and relational exchanges through personal interactions are essential for true connectedness. Various forms of social media and other tools can aid with connectivity but, alone, they are very impersonal. Face-to-face interaction is an absolute essential for true connectedness.

On Sunday, when I leave church after three services interacting with leaders and members, my body is tired but my spirit is energized. For certain, some of the interaction is simply a link, but fortunately for me, there is a significant element of relational connectedness each week.

Genuine connection with those who share the same vision and passion is the most refreshing and energizing of experiences. Ultimately, connectedness is good for the soul, both for the ministry volunteers I lead and for me. ●

**LARRY HOLLAND** has served in full-time ministry since 1999 and presently serves as church consultant for Churches in Covenant International, an association of churches and ministries ([churchesincovenant.org](http://churchesincovenant.org)). Prior to entering full-time ministry, he was a business leader and served in his local church in a volunteer capacity for more than 30 years. He holds a BBA in accounting from Memphis State University.





## Books to Consider ...

Also see a selection of audio versions of select books featured in *Outcomes* magazine in the CLA / Libro.fm bookstore! ([bit.ly/CLA-Libro](http://bit.ly/CLA-Libro))

### **DIVERSITY AND PHILANTHROPY:**

**Expanding the Circle of Giving**  
By Dr. Lilya Wagner (Praeger, 2016)

As nonprofit leaders find themselves in an increasingly diverse philanthropic environment, it's essential to know how to harness the power of cultural diversity. *Diversity and Philanthropy: Expanding the Circle of Giving* offers well-researched information and insights about specific population groups, their cultures, traditions and practices in North America, and how these factors influence and affect philanthropy. Dr. Lilya Wagner's personal and professional experience brings together knowledge of culture, diversity and generosity and places it into practical perspectives.

**GIVING IT ALL AWAY ... AND GETTING IT ALL BACK AGAIN: The Way of Living Generously**  
By David Green with Bill High (Zondervan, 2017)

David Green, founder of Hobby Lobby, believes that generosity and building a legacy based on giving can lead to getting back what you really want: a family that stays together, prays together and shares life joyfully. In this book — part memoir, part personal manifesto — Green shares life lessons on giving. "We are put on this earth to give, to devote ourselves to a radical brand of generosity that changes lives and leaves a legacy," said Green.

**MORE RULES OF FUNDRAISING**  
By Douglas K. Shaw (CreateSpace, 2017)

*More Rules of Fundraising* by Douglas Shaw, founder/CEO/chairman, Douglas Shaw & Associates, is a new continuation of his earlier volume *The Rules of Fundraising*. This new volume contains another 35 rules that experienced fundraisers know and use. It gets into the dicey stuff from 36 years of experience — like the damage an ineffective CEO can inflict upon a ministry, and the great gifts an effective CEO brings.

### **THE VIBRANT WORKPLACE:**

**Overcoming the Obstacles to Building a Culture of Appreciation**

By Dr. Paul White (Northfield Publishing, 2017)

It happens all the time: a leader reads a book or goes to a conference and learns great new ideas for their organization. But when they try to implement changes, nothing budges. Why? It's because work cultures are deeply rooted. Dr. Paul White wrote *The Vibrant Workplace* to give workplace leaders a thorough understanding of common obstacles to change, plus the skills to overcome them. Learn to uproot negativity and cultivate authentic appreciation and resiliency in your workplace.

**START WITH AMEN: How I Learned to Surrender by Keeping the End in Mind**  
By Beth Guckenberger (Thomas Nelson, 2017)

Throughout the centuries, Christian tradition has taught us to end prayers with *amen*. But the Bible is full of stories where God's people *started* their prayers with *amen*. Why? As Beth Guckenberger shows, *amen* is more than just a way to punctuate a conversation with the God of the universe. *Amen* is a declaration of who God is and who we are in relation to him — a moment of submission and worship.

**THE SELF-AWARE LEADER: Discovering Your Blind Spots to Reach Your Ministry Potential**  
By Terry Linhart (IVP Books, 2017)

You need to build your ministry career on the right foundation of an objective understanding of self. If you don't comprehend your strengths and weaknesses, then you won't be fully prepared to enter the crucible of ministry. The church needs leaders who have the clear-eyed courage to pursue the hardest part of the ministry journey: seeing yourself. *The Self-Aware Leader* will help you to do just that.

### **THE SOCIAL CHURCH: A Theology of Digital Communication**

By Justin Wise (Moody Publishers, 2014)

Learn to think theologically about digital communication. "Justin Wise connects the power of social media with the potential for life-changing ministry in a completely fresh, easy-to-understand and relevant way. His energy and wisdom bleed through the pages. He totally gets it and now you can too. *The Social Church* is a must-read for all Christian leaders called to serve in this time and space," said Tami Heim, president and CEO of Christian Leadership Alliance.

**@STICKYJESUS: How to Live Out Your Faith Online**  
By Toni Birdsong and Tami Heim (Abingdon Press, 2012)

*@stickyJesus* helps Christ followers gain biblical perspective as effective ministers of the gospel online. Authors Toni Birdsong and Tami Heim define sticky (stik'ē) as the message that adheres and clings to the heart of every generation — eternal content independent of time, change and cyberspace. The book is a fusion of discipleship, faith sharing, marketing and a Get Started 101 on Twitter, Facebook and blogging. (Also available in e-book format).

**THE CONNECTED CHURCH: A Social Media Communication Strategy Guide for Churches, Nonprofits and Individuals in Ministry**  
By Natchi Lazarus (CreateSpace, 2017)

We are in a new era of communication. The Internet and social media have changed the way we connect and communicate with each other. As the body of Christ, it is important that we understand these changes so that we can effectively serve others. This book will help you understand these global, technology-enabled changes and how they impact churches, nonprofits and individuals in ministry.

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# Breaking Through

## Brand-building in a world of algorithms, ad blockers and fake news

**FOUR YEARS AGO**, I became the national spokesperson for The Salvation Army. My journey with The Salvation Army began in 1978 when, as a student at Asbury College, I was a bell ringer in New York City during Christmas break. I fell in love with the mission those kettles represent: to meet human need, wherever it exists, in Christ's name, without discrimination.

That first contact has led to four decades of adventures around the world, from the International College for Officers in London to providing hands-on daily services to people in need in the southern U.S. to two posts in Haiti, one to lead our rebuilding effort after the devastating earthquake of 2010.

A national spokesperson's job is to communicate why and what The Salvation Army does and to encourage people to give back in their communities. Raising awareness of how people can help — during Red Kettle season, during disasters or year-round — has been my daily privilege.

Our communications environment has undergone a remarkable and sometimes confounding transformation. At the national level, we used to pitch a story or buy an ad on a few prominent network news programs. Now our stories must be shaped and packaged not just for the newsroom but for the Facebook News Feed and the Twittersphere as well.

The exploding popularity of social media has altered how news is viewed and shared. Almost half of adults say they get news stories from social media at least once a week; one in 10 say it's their main source. Last year, for the first time, people between the ages of 18 and 24 reported getting news from social media at a higher rate than TV.

Older Americans still watch network and cable news, and they read magazines and newspapers in higher proportions than their younger counterparts, but digital use is rising rapidly among the 55-plus age group too.

So, what is the key to optimizing storytelling in this new world? The essential element is a rock-solid definition of what you want to stand for in the minds of the public. For us, that can be summed up in four seemingly simple words: *Doing the Most Good*.

Our tagline, introduced 12 years ago, is packed with meaning. The phrase speaks to our unwavering dedication to serving vulnerable citizens with basic needs and a message of Jesus' love. Our officers

believe they are answers to a prayer — both blessed and a blessing — that they are *Doing the Most Good*.

The phrase also reflects The Salvation Army's legacy of responsible stewardship of our donors' gifts. That renowned efficiency led economist and management expert Peter Drucker to declare The Salvation Army the "most effective organization in the world." *Doing the Most Good* appeals to both the head and the heart.

It was relatively easy to put the phrase on our donation trucks and canteens. Bringing it to life — through digital storytelling, calls for donations, pitches to media, disaster coverage on cable news, advocacy days on Capitol Hill and social media posts — is our ongoing challenge. We have learned three key lessons:

**1. Seize the moment.** If you find your organization suddenly in the public eye, as we did recently when a Dallas Cowboys player jumped into a giant Red Kettle on Sunday Night Football, you have 72 hours or so to leverage the limelight. With help from the Dallas Cowboys, we encouraged donations of \$21 (the player, Zeke Elliott's, number), and we were hyperactive on social media. We raised almost \$250,000 in a week.

**2. Make yourself a resource.** Reach out to reporters, writers, think tanks and policy makers who care about the same issues as you. With the help of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University, we leveraged decades of service-delivery statistics into the first nonprofit-based, multidimensional measure of poverty, the Human Needs Index.

**3. Seek out like-minded advocates.** Look to those in the worlds of sports, television, music and social media to help tell your story. A YouTube star or a mommy blogger will have a different following than a halftime A-lister or a network morning show anchor. What they all should share is a squeaky-clean reputation and an authentic connection to your cause.

Understanding changing consumer behavior and keeping up with technology is not optional in today's communications environment. But when the rewards of breaking through are measured in human lives helped or healed, it is well worth the struggle. ●

**LT. COL. RON BUSROE** has served The Salvation Army for more than 40 years. In his role as national community relations and development secretary, Busroe serves as the public spokesperson for the organization and focuses on raising awareness of Salvation Army social service programs and volunteer opportunities throughout the United States ([salvationarmyusa.org](http://salvationarmyusa.org)).



# THE GENEROSITY PROJECT



## Discovering Why Millennials Give to Ministries



**HONESTY**  
the most desirable  
quality givers seek  
in a ministry



agree it is extremely  
important for ministries  
to uphold specific standards  
of financial integrity

### Millennials

### 35+ years old



feel hopeful after giving to an  
organization for the first time

**69%**

**60%**



OK with one communication  
from organization per month

**35%**

**29%**



research an organization on  
its website before giving

**96%**

**88%**



check third-  
party websites



ask people  
they know

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