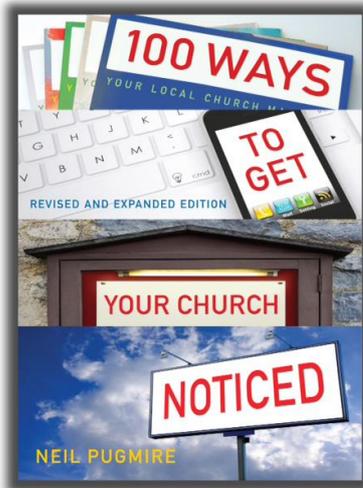


GET YOUR CHURCH NOTICED



INTRODUCTION

We already communicate in lots of ways that add to the perception that church is traditional, establishment, old-fashioned, safe, about buildings, and for the literate and middle-class. Often means the Church can be safely ignored. Book aims to put that right: *100 Ways To Get Your Church Noticed* available from Christian bookshops or via www.chpublishing.co.uk. See also accompanying website: www.getyourchurchnoticed.com for other examples of good and bad publicity material.

HOW DID JESUS COMMUNICATE?

- He knew his message;
- He knew his audience;
- He used different methods for different groups (crowds, disciples, individuals)

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE?

- The Gospel?
- “Church is fun, not dull”
- “We care about our community”
- Sometimes comes across as: “We’re desperate for new people, please join us – but only on our terms”
- or “We want your money”?

WHO ARE OUR AUDIENCE?

- The congregation?
- People living in parish?
- Tourists?
- Visitors?
- Those who use your church/church hall?
- Specific group over-represented in your parish (students/over 50s)?
- People not like us!

WHAT METHODS WORK WITH OUR AUDIENCES?

- People like us might use the methods we like: written word, letter, e-mail, phone, lecture.
- People not like us might use different methods: flyers, texting, podcasts, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, mobile-friendly websites, apps

In many ways, the medium is the message. The way that it is presented is just as important as content.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. **Images, not words:** So much of what we do at church involves words. So much in the wider world is visual.
2. **Stories, not events:** People are interested in other people, not in details of events. Promote stories about people in magazine, website and in press releases.
3. **Symbols, not abstract concepts:** How often do we use logos, signposts and colour coding in our church literature?

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

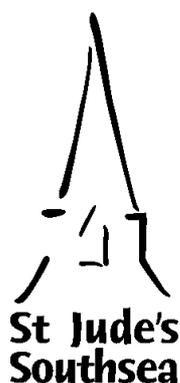
Idea 1: *Set up a communications team to decide on priorities.*
Why?

1. To do market research
2. To ensure consistency
3. To decide priorities

LOGOS

Idea 6: *Decide the kind of identity your church wants and create a suitable logo*

Ideas can come from church architecture, or from church location:



..or can express something about the nature of the congregation:



Logos should then be used on all church literature, plus on noticeboard or the side of your church building



CHURCH BUILDING

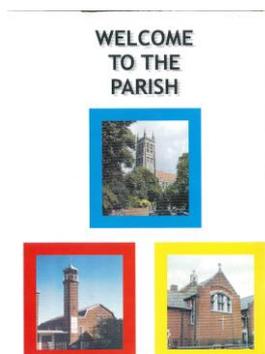
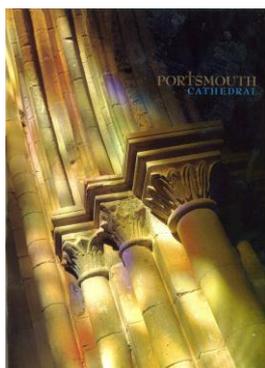
What does it communicate already?

- Closed or open?
- Intimidating or welcoming?
- Rooted in ritual or informality?
- Old-fashioned or modern?
- Cold or warm?
- Full of junk or tidy?
- Uncomfortable or comfortable?
- Provide spiritual resources or not?

Idea 14: *Re-design your church's entrance or foyer to make it look more attractive*



Idea 36: *Produce a welcome pack with essential information about church activities*



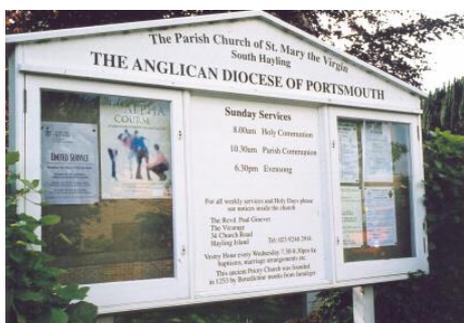
NOTICEBOARDS

Idea 26: Revamp your noticeboards to suggest a more vibrant congregation

Do you want to suggest traditional, old-fashioned – or modern and vibrant?



Glass-fronted section important for posters about activities and events:

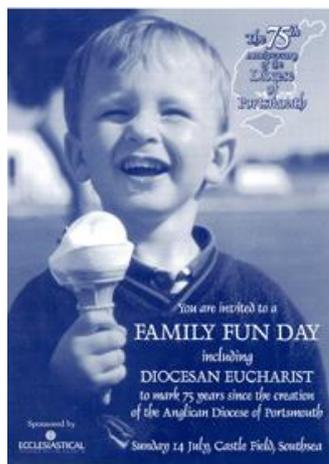
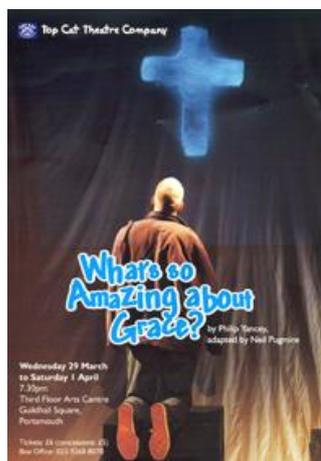


What about using banners for really high-profile events – or to illustrate who goes to church?



LEAFLETS AND POSTERS

Idea 50: Produce well-designed posters with attention-grabbing images, fewer words and more colour



PARISH MAGAZINE

Content of magazine:

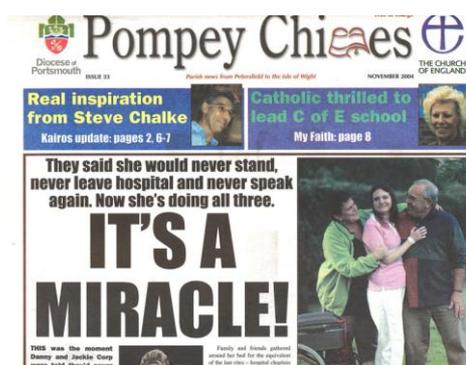
- People like to read news;
- People like to read stories about other people;
- People like to read about things happening locally;
- Be more pro-active about articles: commission them, write them yourself or recruit a reporter? (link content of articles with communications strategy)

Idea 57: Encourage your editors to edit.

Be ruthless! Edit or omit articles that are too long, beef up articles that are important and fit in with your communications strategy. Three considerations:

- editor is supposed to help the reader find out what's the most important thing happening. If you just collate what people give to you, not doing that job properly.
- contributors often have no experience of writing, so they appreciate it if material is improved in some way.
- if you make it clear that all articles will be edited, no one is in any doubt that if they contribute something it will be altered.

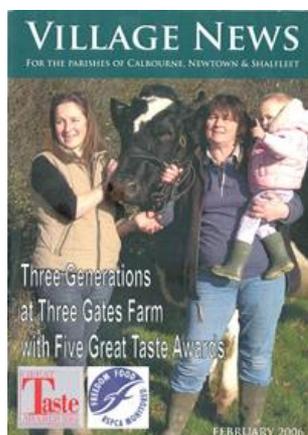
Idea 58: Include stories of faith from people in your congregation



Idea 60: Revamp the design of your parish magazine

Use of colour (or one colour plus black and white), columns, white space, tinted boxes and much, much larger headlines all help to make pages look more lively.

Use of photos (especially photos of people) is also vital, especially on front page as it creates the right impression:



Idea 61: Improve production of your magazine

Virtual circle: PCC subsidy/Increased advertising charges → Better production process → Magazine looks better → Can charge more for advertising → Better production process...

Idea 62: Create a more effective distribution system

Ideally, supply free of charge to every household in the parish. If this creates problems, why not reduce the number of editions per year?

MEDIA LIAISON

Why bother with the media?

- To keep the rumour of God alive;
- To restore a balanced perspective;
- To correct misconceptions;
- To have our say.

Idea 67: Recruit someone to promote good news in your church.

What is news?

- News is about something local, not national;
- News is something new, not something ongoing ('church appeal ongoing' is not news, 'church appeal launched' is);
- News is about something out of the ordinary, not something normal ('vicar leads church service' is not news; 'vicar DJs at local club' is);
- It's more likely to be news when it's something visual that suggests a photo ('cathedral appeal service' is not news, 'vicars abseil from cathedral roof to present first cheques' is).

But, most importantly: Remember that **news is about people, not about events:**

Idea 68: Learn how to write press releases that will be used.

Tips on writing a good press release:

- Do it in advance!
- Ask yourself who this will affect?
- Think of the six Ws: Who? What? When? Where? Why (what was catalyst)?
How (process you went through)?
- Avoid jargon
- Keep it short: one side of A4.
- Include quotes
- Include opportunity for photographs
- Include contact numbers
- Follow it up.

Remember that the media is likely to print only one photo, so try to make the photo tell the story for you:



WEBSITES



What is your audience?

- Churchgoers or non-churchgoers? Will affect design & content of website

Design:

- Responsive design changes automatically on mobiles & tablets;
- Use a template (Wordpress/Church Edit/Django Church)
- Software: work out who will update it & how
- Image-based: one large photo on each page to sum up that activity
- Simple text: minimum number of words
- Easy navigation system: minimum number of clicks to get where you need to be
- Share-ability: Use ShareThis or something similar

Content:

- Basic information: services, activities, events, location
- 'Seeker' information: what do we believe, why do we worship this way, faith stories
- Ask the questions outsiders are asking: postcode, car parking, toilets, creche
- Interactivity: answer questions, offer to pray for people, book the vicar
- Photos: use photos to address misconceptions
- Keep updated

Extras:

- Podcasts/audio recordings of sermons
- Videos: edited professionally or raw footage
- Collect 'subscriptions' to send email updates to
- Live streaming of services
- A Church Near You



God's healing led to true faith

Jane Kent found true faith in God when he healed her from a debilitating disease



Lives transformed inside a US prison

It was the coincidence of rehearsing both the crucifixion of Christ and the execution of an inmate o..



I saw how we made a real difference to these lives

She was already committed to helping the poorest children in our world. Now she's met some..



Jesus saved our failing marriage

It was a difficult route that brought Les and Terry Roper to God. Through 13 years and four countries..



Hindu converted to following Jesus

When Hom Nath Dhakal became a Christian, it made life a lot more complicated. He was a devout Hindu..



We begged God to heal our little boy

God answered Jane Goddard's prayers when her son was seriously ill – and it changed her life and gave..



Prayer helped our girl to pull through

When Bethany Rose fell seriously ill, her parents had no idea what the future would hold – but their..



It's a Miracle!

This was the moment Danny and Jackie Corp were told they'd never see

SOCIAL MEDIA

Three ways in which social media is different:

- DIALOGUE: it is a two-way conversation;
- IMMEDIACY: it's happening in real time
- NETWORKS: it depends on our network of friends

But...

- It's not a magic way of solving publicity problems/reaching young people
- Requires constant attention
- Another way for people to complain! A generous, public response will help.

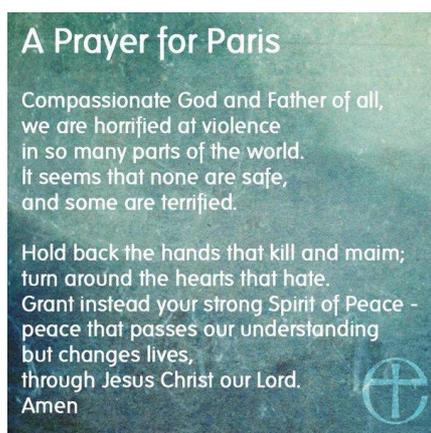
Types of social media:

- *Facebook page*: public face of your church, with events, info, photos and links to church website. Appears in people's news feeds when they 'like' your page.
- *Facebook group*: members-only closed group. Discussion among congregation, prayer requests.

- *Twitter feed*: 140-character brief updates. You 'follow' others, other people follow you.
- *Youtube channel*: short videos of church events/activities. Second to Google as the search engine of choice

What to share:

1. Announcements about events/activities
2. Links to your web pages
3. Links to other people's web pages
4. Photos from your events/activities
5. Backstage
6. Ask for people's opinions about faith: 'ask the vicar' sessions?
7. Live-tweet an event or service
8. Suggestions for prayer



People respond to:

- Being first with great content: stories about people, images, video
- Emotional engagement: humour, injustice and empathy
- Discussion: "Your thoughts are important. We aren't preaching at you"

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