



COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Updated January 5, 2022



PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES

These guidelines serve as the standard for how First Baptist Church O'Fallon, IL functions in regards to it's communication. The term "communication" may encompass graphic design, print materials, promotional items and campaigns, social media, website and all other ways in which the church shares with it's members and external community.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Communication Request Form

This form is required in order for any communication, graphic design, or event request to be completed by the Communications Team. Requests submitted via email, Slack, text message, phone call, direct conversation will be directed to complete the form. No project will be started without a Communication Request Form submitted.

Timeline For Requests

It is the responsibility of each ministry or department to submit a request in a timely manner. All requests should be given a minimum of two weeks to complete. Any request made with a completion date within two weeks will not be given priority above other requested projects apart from special circumstances or an oversight from the Communication Team (an example of an oversight might look like a request form submitted correctly but the project was not completed in a timely manner). In addition, any request submitted within two weeks may be denied by the Communications Team.

Project Priority

It is the responsibility of the Communications Team to ensure submitted projects are completed by or before the deadline. If there are unexpected delays, the Communications Team will message the person who submitted the request in writing. It is not the responsibility of the Communications Team to follow up additionally once the initial message has been sent.

Requesting Changes To Submitted Requests

Any changes should be submitted in writing, never verbally communicated. Please follow the expressed, preferred method provided by the Communications Team: email or Slack. Please do not communicate through text message, phone call, social media or any other form of communication.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The following strategy serve as the means for how the church will communicate most effectively given the methods and mediums available. These strategies will be evaluated as communication continues to change and evolve.

1. The Barometer We Use To Measure Effectiveness Is 'Next Steps'

Communication for the sake of communication is ineffective and adds noise to an already loud world and busy church schedule. Every area of communication should direct its audience to some type of meaningful next step. *Based on the mission and vision statements of FBCO, the following should be the standards for effective communication:*

- Does it direct people to worship?
- Does it direct people to ministry/service?
- Does it direct people to evangelism?
- Does it direct people to fellowship?
- Does it direct people to discipleship?

2. Next Steps Should Point To The Website

While information can be made available in multiple avenues, the most effective tool at our disposal to serve as a common and effective place for communication is the website (fbcofallon.org). What is communicated via social media, bulletin, hand outs, etc. needs to be available to access online.

3. Every Call-To-Action Should Be Specific

Insider language and understanding often does not produce action in those outside or unfamiliar with the organization's terms. When speaking, sharing, posting or sending, the language should be specific. *For example: never say "You can find it on our website." Instead say, "You can find it online at fbcofallon.org."*

4. The 50% Rule

The best method our church can use to communicate lies within the 50% rule. This rule suggests that if what you're communicating does not apply to at least 50% of your audience, you find another means of communication which applies to your audience.

When people are inundated with information that does not apply to them, they begin to ignore it all together. In this way, we are targeting our communication in the most effective way possible. In order for communication to be most effective, it has to be applicable to the majority of your audience.

For example: Information about a Jr. High Summer Camp likely does not apply to half of a Sunday morning service. While there are people in the room who this does apply to, posting on the Student Ministry social media sites, placing it on the Student Ministry web page or sending it as a part of a parent email is going to best reach its intended audience.

Important Note: There is a difference between your audience and your intended audience. For example, a Sunday morning bulletin's audience is everyone in the building, however, the information is directed toward the intended audience. If neither audience meets the threshold of the 50% rule, we find a different means of communication.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (CONT.)

5. The 1-in-5 Rule (Social Media)

Similarly to the 50% rule, this rule focuses on streamlining communication in its most effective format. For this rule, the concept is that only 1-in-5 of our church's social media posts focus on some type of promotion. When a social media platform only becomes about its next upcoming events, it's developed into an online bulletin and the audience begins to tune out its message.

In following the guidelines, the most effective means of communication via social media is to direct people to next steps which direct them to the five functions of the church (see rule #1).

6. Prepare For The Less-Than-Perfect Approach

There is no perfect system in place which is why this rule exists. There may be times when the 1-in-5 rule is broken or the communication strategy is set aside for the greater good of a need in the church – however, it should still be directing people to a next step of some type. This is where the Communication Team must plan and think strategically about what is happening, when it's happening and how to most effectively communicate with the maximum number of people.

7. Share Stories & Next Steps

The greatest means of engagement in almost any communication context is not going to be a promotion, but a story. People are engaged with stories in a way in which they are not with other forms of communication. If the church is more than just its programming and is truly its people, then the stories of the people should be shown and communicated.

For example: A promotion would share the need for additional workers in the Kid's Ministry and direct them to go talk to someone. On the other side, a story would show a person who's worked in the Kid's Ministry and how it has impacted their life in a meaningful way with a directed next step on the website to sign up as a volunteer.

COMMUNICATION IMPLEMENTATION

Bulletin & Screens

- The focus will be on next steps and helping connect first-time guests to our church.
- Events and opportunities which do not meet the 50% rule will not be promoted (see rule #6).
- These will highlight and emphasize the five functions of the church.

Website

- Requires attention from ministries/departments to ensure information is up-to-date and accurate as it serves as the central hub of next steps.

Social Media

- Will highlight and emphasize the five functions of the church.
- Events and opportunities which do not meet the 50% rule will not be promoted (see rule #6).
- Will follow the 1-in-5 rule (see #5).