

*A Quick
Start*
GUIDE



CHURCH COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

A Quick Start Guide for Local Church Communication Directors

Updated September 2010

Manuscript created for the Communication Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America

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Available from:
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www.adventsource.org

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN #: 978-1-57756-306-8

Introduction

Welcome to a ministry that has amazing potential for sharing the message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As communication director, your role includes sharing news with church members and ensuring your church is properly represented to the community. You have three primary groups of people to communicate with: members of your church, your conference communication department, and the community.

Church Members

Church members need to know what's happening at your church. This group includes those who attend every week, occasionally, rarely, shut-ins, and inactive members.

Conference Communication Department

You are part of a global network of Adventist communicators, helping the Seventh-day Adventist Church stay connected. By sending articles and photos to your conference communication director, you are sharing your news with members around the world and recording the church's history.

Community

This group includes people whose experience with the Adventist Church ranges from positive to negative, their knowledge from extensive to non-existent. You are looking for ways to raise awareness of the Adventist Church and to motivate people from the community to come to your church. Events such as VBS, cooking classes, an evangelistic series, or a financial planning seminar are prime opportunities to get visitors inside your church's doors.

Communication Committee

If your communication team consists of several people, the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* suggests forming a communication committee. The communication director would serve as chair and the committee could include a webmaster, audio/visual director, newsletter editor, photographer, and members who are media or technology professionals. This committee will work together to plan the church's public relations strategy.

The Church's Structure

To get a better idea of how you, as a local church communication volunteer, fit into the church, here is a look at the four levels of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's structure.

1. The local church is made up of individual believers.
2. The local conference, or local field/mission, is made up of a number of local churches in a state, province, or territory.
3. The union conference, or union field/mission, is made up of conferences or fields within a larger territory (often a grouping of states or a whole country).
4. The general conference, the most extensive unit of organization, is made up of all unions/entities in all parts of the world. Divisions are sections of the general conference, with administrative responsibility for particular geographical areas.

News and Information

Church Bulletin Announcements and Inserts

Church bulletins and special flyers are ideal for communicating with members who attend church every week. Carefully examine the bulletin. Is the information current and correct? Is the picture on the cover appropriate? Is it easy to find the information you need? If the bulletin does not meet these criteria, it may be time for a redesign.

Tips:

- If the bulletin contains errors, enlist the help of a proofreader.
- Reevaluate the bulletin's look from time to time. Find a member with design skills to help keep the design updated so your bulletin looks current.
- Be consistent in your style, i.e. commas, capitalization, and abbreviations.
- Keep the number of fonts to a minimum.
- Carefully choose each cover image.
- Create bulletin inserts to draw attention to special events or announcements.
- If you are not the bulletin editor, be nice to that person when presenting your suggestions.

North American Division Union Conferences, Local Conferences, and Papers***Atlantic Union Conference***

Headquarters: South Lancaster, Massachusetts
Conferences: Bermuda, Greater New York, New York, Northeastern, Northern New England, and Southern New England
Union magazine: Gleaner

Columbia Union Conference

Headquarters: Columbia, Maryland
Conferences: Allegheny East, Allegheny West, Chesapeake, Mountain View, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Potomac
Union magazine: Visitor

Lake Union Conference

Headquarter: Berrien Springs, Michigan
Conferences: Illinois, Indiana, Lake Region, Michigan, and Wisconsin
Union magazine: Herald

Mid-America Union Conference

Headquarters: Lincoln, Nebraska
Conferences: Central States, Dakota, Iowa-Missouri, Kansas-Nebraska, Minnesota, and Rocky Mountain
Union magazine: Outlook

North Pacific Union Conference

Headquarters: Vancouver, Washington
Conferences: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Upper Columbia, and Washington
Union magazine: Gleaner

Pacific Union Conference

Headquarters: Westlake Village, California
Conferences: Arizona, Central California, Hawaii, Nevada-Utah, Northern California, Southeastern California, and Southern California
Union magazine: Recorder

Canadian Union Conference

Headquarters: Oshawa, Ontario
Comprising the Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba-Saskatchewan, Maritime, Ontario, and Quebec Conferences, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador
Union magazine: Canadian Adventist Messenger

Southern Union Conference

Headquarters: Decatur, Georgia
Conferences: Carolina, Florida, Georgia-Cumberland, Gulf States, Kentucky-Tennessee, South Atlantic, South Central, and Southeastern
Union magazine: Tidings

Southwest Union Conference

Headquarters: Burleson, Texas
Conferences: Arkansas-Louisiana, Oklahoma, Southwest Region, Texas, and Texico
Union magazine: Record

Foyer Bulletin Board

Bulletin boards are a good way to connect with members on Sabbath. They create a conversation piece for people who stop to talk in the foyer. Consider posting photo collages of church events and new members. People like seeing pictures of themselves, their children, and their friends. Make it bright and colorful, and include flyers advertising upcoming events.

Church Information Packets

Consider assembling packets or gift bags to give to visitors. Include a brochure such as *What's a Seventh-day Adventist*, *Steps to Christ*, flyers advertising upcoming events, information about Bible courses, and a greeting from the pastor. You could also include a notepad, pen, or magnet with the church's contact information. Include a comment card and ask for the visitor's name, address, email, and how they heard about your church. This will be helpful for follow-up calls and visits. Once the packets are assembled, let the greeters know what to do.

Church Newsletter

A newsletter is a great way to connect a church family. Newsletters keep members aware of events, programs, and church news. They also provide a way to reach members who haven't been to church for a while. Don't forget to include your conference communication director on your mailing or email list.

The communication committee must choose an editor. The editor does not necessarily have to be the communication director, though you will work closely with this person. Talk with your pastor about the need for a newsletter. What is its purpose? How often should it be printed or emailed?

Your newsletter's title should be catchy and have something to do with your church. You could involve members and create interest by holding a naming contest.

Whether you print or email your newsletter, remember that simple formats are the best. Choose modern and easily readable fonts and keep the number of fonts to a minimum. Whether your newsletter is printed or emailed, remember to include your church's name, address, phone number, email address, and website in every issue so people know who it's from.

If your newsletter is printed, your content could include stories about people – mission trip experiences, new members, community service participation, and profiles. Let readers know what's coming up at your church, and if there's anything interesting happening at other churches in the area. Highlight different departments and ministries.

When creating an email newsletter, remember that people read differently on a computer screen than in print. You can send email newsletters more frequently than print newsletters so you don't have to pack in quite so much information, and it's easier to keep your information timely and relevant. This makes the email newsletter more approachable. You will also save money since design, printing, and postage are not required.

Keep email paragraphs and sentences short and include headers over each section. Limit the length of your email to one or two screens. If you would like to provide more details on a certain topic, include a link to a page on your website with more information.

Make sure your email newsletter features the church's name so readers can easily identify the source and include an option for readers to opt out at any time.

Submitting News to Your Conference

Your conference communication director is looking for stories to share with the larger church community. Stories about community service projects, evangelistic meetings, community recognition, and outstanding members are examples of the types of news conference communication directors seek. Depending on the story, it may be used in a print publication, an email newsletter, or featured on the conference or union website. Your local conference communication director will supply you with a list of instructions.

Below is the basic structure you can follow for news stories. The goal is to tailor articles to grazing readers:

1. Basic headline (subject, verb, descriptor)
2. Creative summary intro (who, what, when, where)
3. Quick background or context (why this story matters to readers)
4. Quote from leader
5. Ministry/event details (how)
6. Quote from participant/volunteer
7. Non-editorial wrap up or call to action

Rules for Good Writing

- The simple word is the best word.
- Keep headlines short and present tense. Study newspapers for examples.
- Avoid excessive "to be" verbs: is, are, was, were, have, has, and had.
- The simple sentence is better than the complicated sentence.

- Vary your sentence and paragraph length.
- Cut needless words, sentences, and paragraphs.
- Don't begin a sentence with a date. The date is less interesting than the event that happened on that date.
- Don't editorialize. Never write, "A good time was had by all." Instead, get a quote from someone explaining why they enjoyed the event.
- Get lots of quotes and identify each speaker.
- Be culturally sensitive. Instead of using "crusade," consider "evangelistic event" or "evangelistic meetings."
- Revise and rewrite.
- Never quote yourself in an article for which you are listed as the author. Get a quote from someone else. If that's not possible, remove your name from the byline.
- Reread your work or find a good copy editor.

Watch for Jargon

Adventism has its own language. Terms such as North American Division and Mid-America Union Conference won't make sense to the community. Instead, say "the Adventist Church in North America" and "the Adventist Church in the Midwest." Remember that visitors have probably never gone ingathering, eaten Loma Linda foods, or gone to vespers. However, they will understand fundraisers, meat substitutes, and Friday night services. You'll also need to watch for religious clichés such as season of prayer, high Sabbath, and traveling mercies.

Church Name Usage

Correct:

Seventh-day Adventist (first reference)
 Adventist (subsequent references)
 SDA

Incorrect:

Seventh Day Adventist
 Seventy-Day Adventist
 Seventh day Adventist

Church Logo Guidelines

To access the official Seventh-day Adventist Church logo, visit www.adventist.org and type "logo" into the search bar. You can find a description of the logo, guidelines for usage, and downloadable versions of the Adventist logo in different formats and languages. You can also find the meaning of the different symbols used in the logo.

Photography

Photos are crucial for making your publications interesting. Members love to see pictures of themselves, families, friends, and especially children. High-quality photos will also tell visitors a story about your church, who attends, how to dress for events, and give them an idea of what to expect. Your photos will appear on your church website, in the conference newsletter, in your church newsletter, and anywhere else you choose to use pictures such as on the bulletin board.

Tips for Great Photos

By Kelly Coe

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- 1. Look your subject in the eye.** Direct eye contact can be as engaging in a picture as it is in real life. When taking a picture of someone, hold the camera at the person's eye level to unleash the power of those magnetic gazes and mesmerizing smiles. For children, that means stooping to their level. And your subject need not always stare at the camera. All by itself that eye level angle will create a personal and inviting feeling that pulls you into the picture.
- 2. Use a plain background.** A plain background shows off the subject you are photographing. When you look through the camera viewfinder, force yourself to study the area surrounding your subject. Make sure that no poles grow from the head of your favorite church member!
- 3. Use flash outdoors.** Bright sun can create unattractive facial shadows. Eliminate the shadows by using your flash to lighten the face. When taking people pictures on sunny days, turn your flash on. You may have a choice of fill-flash mode or full-flash mode. If the person is within five feet, use the fill-flash mode; beyond five feet the full-power mode may be required. With a digital camera, use the picture display panel to review the results.

On cloudy days, use the camera's fill-flash mode if it has one. The flash will brighten up people's faces and make them stand out. Also take a picture without the flash, because the soft light of overcast days sometimes gives quite pleasing results by itself.
- 4. Move in close.** If your subject is smaller than a car, take a step or two closer before taking the picture and zoom in on your subject. Your goal is to fill the picture area with the subject you are photographing. Up close you can reveal telling details, like a sprinkle of freckles or an arched eyebrow.

But don't get too close or your pictures will be blurry. The closest focusing distance for most cameras is about three feet, or about one step away from the camera. If you get closer than the closest focusing distance of your camera (see your manual to be sure), your pictures will be blurry.

- 5. Move it from the middle.** Center-stage is a great place for a performer to be. However, the middle of your picture is not the best place for your subject. Bring your picture to life by moving your subject away from the middle of your picture. Start by playing tick-tack-toe with subject position. Imagine a tick-tack-toe grid in your viewfinder. Now place your subject at one of the intersections of lines.
- 6. Know your flash's range.** The number one mistake is taking pictures beyond the flash's range. Why is this a mistake? Because pictures taken beyond the maximum flash range will be too dark. For many cameras, the maximum flash range is less than 15 feet – about five steps away. What is your camera's flash range? Look it up in your camera manual. Can't find it? Then don't take a chance. Position yourself so subjects are no farther than ten feet away.
- 7. Watch the light.** Next to the subject, the most important part of every picture is the light. It affects the appearance of everything you photograph. On a great-grandmother, bright sunlight from the side can enhance wrinkles. But the soft light of a cloudy day can subdue those same wrinkles.

Don't like the light on your subject? Then move yourself or your subject. For landscapes, try to take pictures early or late in the day when the light is orangish and rakes across the land.
- 8. Take some vertical pictures.** Is your camera vertically challenged? It is if you never turn it sideways to take a vertical picture. All sorts of things look better in a vertical picture. From a lighthouse near a cliff to the Eiffel Tower to your four-year-old niece jumping in a puddle. So next time out, make a conscious effort to turn your camera sideways and take some vertical pictures.
- 9. Be a picture director.** Take control of your picture-taking and watch your pictures dramatically improve. Become a picture director, not just a passive picture-taker. A picture director takes charge. A picture director picks the location: "Everybody goes out in the backyard." A picture director adds props: "Girls, put on your pink sunglasses." A picture director arranges people: "Now move in close, and lean toward the camera."

Composing Your Pictures

Just as a composer uses all the instruments in a symphony to create a stirring piece of music, you should compose each picture so that its parts work together to create a work of beauty. Each item in a picture has an effect on the whole, so don't just point and shoot. Take a little time to compose each picture into the masterpiece it could be.

Choosing a Main Point of Interest

Although you know what your subject is, it can be hard for a viewer to determine your intent if too many elements in your picture make it confusing. Eliminate all unimportant elements by moving closer, zooming in, or choosing a different shooting angle.

Adjust Your Angle of View

For the most complimentary portrait, shoot at your subject's eye level. However, if you want to have some creative fun, change your angle of view.

Alter Your Position

Change your position to emphasize or exaggerate how big or small your subject is. Crouch down and shoot up at someone and the person towers over you. Shoot down on your pet and it seems so comically small. You can also move your camera right or left only a few feet to change the composition dramatically.

Placing the Subject Off-Center

Putting the subject off-center often makes the composition more dynamic and interesting.

Even if your subject fills the frame, the most important part of the subject (for example, the eyes in a portrait) should not be dead center.

Watch the horizon. Just as an off-center subject is usually best, so is an off-center—and straight—horizon line. Avoid cutting your picture in half by placing the horizon in the middle of the picture. To accent spaciousness, keep the horizon low in the picture. To suggest closeness, position the horizon high in your picture.

Photographing in Dim Light

For many people, dim lighting makes for difficult picture-taking. But it is also an opportunity for exciting pictures. So when the clouds roll in at camp meeting or the sanctuary isn't brightly lit, you'll be ready to create pictures that shine.

Hold the camera extra steady. To avoid blurry pictures, brace your camera on a railing, the back of a pew or table, or against a column or tree. This helps keep the camera from moving and blurring the pictures. Or use a pocket or full-size tripod.

Wait for the action to slow. If your subject is moving, wait for it to slow down or stop before you take the picture.

Stay within the flash range. The typical camera flash range is six to 10 feet, up to 15 feet for film cameras. Subjects that are outside the flash range will be either too dark or too light. Check the camera manual and make sure your subject is within the flash range.

Press the shutter button smoothly. To avoid blurry pictures, don't jab the shutter button and jar the camera. Press it gently and smoothly so your pictures are sharp.

Avoid Red Eye

Ask your subject to look at your shoulder rather than directly at the camera. Turning on all the room lights also helps. If your camera has a “red-eye reduction” feature, use it.

Avoid Flash Reflections

When you use flash, avoid windows and mirrors in the background. They’ll reflect the flash, creating glare that can ruin an otherwise great shot. If you can’t avoid them, stand diagonally from your subject to take the picture.

Photographing Groups

In general it’s easier to take group pictures outdoors so if you have a choice, move everybody outside. If this isn’t an option, try to keep the group in a tight arrangement, so that the flash will reach each person. Try creating two or three different small arrangements within the bigger group. One or two loose triangles of three people each works well.

Tell a Story

Any important event can become a picture story. An all-day church event is perfect for a photo story. Show the arrival, the departure, a variety of events during the day, and the tired kids on their way home.

Capture the Emotion

Catch the grins, tears, surprises, and hugs that make for memorable pictures. Keep your camera handy and turned on so you’ll be ready for those spontaneous expressions.

Digital Photography: Glossary

By Kelly Coe

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The lingo used in digital picture-taking is a bit different from that for film users. Pixels, megabytes, resolution, dpi, JPEG: If you’re unfamiliar with these words, take a quick look at the glossary.

Pixel – (PICTure ELement) The smallest element of a digitized image. One small dot of light among the many dots that make up an image on a computer screen.

Megapixel – A unit equal to one million pixels. The higher the resolution, the more pixels in an image and therefore the greater the image quality. An image file that is 1 megapixel (MP) can make a photo realistic print of 5 x 7 inches; a 2 MP file can make an 8 x 10 print; a 3 MP file can make an 11 x 14-inch print.

Resolution – The number of pixels in an image. A higher number correlates to a higher quality image.

DPI – Dots Per Inch. Number of dots a printer or device (like a monitor) can display per linear inch. For example, most laser printers have a resolution of 300 dpi, most monitors 72 dpi, most PostScript imagesetters 1200 to 2450 dpi. Photo quality inkjet printers now range from 1200 to 2400 dpi.

Megabyte – An amount of computer memory consisting of about one million bytes.

Kilobyte – An amount of computer memory, disk space, or document size consisting of approximately one thousand bytes.

JPEG – A standardized format used by many digital cameras for storing images. This format is also commonly used for images on the web and images attached to email messages. JPEG, which stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group, the group that established this file standard, is one of the most widely used formats today. JPEG is a standardized image compression mechanism designed for compressing full-color or gray scale images or natural, real-world scenes. JPEG uses lossy compression, which can damage image quality.

LCD – Liquid Crystal Display. A full-color display screen on cameras used to preview and review pictures and view information, such as menu options and camera settings.

Memory card – A storage device used to store data, such as picture and movie files. Available in a range of sizes, such as 8 MB, 32 MB, and 256 MB.

Digitize – To convert analog information into digital format for use by a computer.

Extra Tips for Good Photos at Church

- Action shots are better than “grin and grab” shots where someone is receiving an award. Instead, show an action shot of what they did to earn that award.
- A few far-away shots are okay to show the scope of an event, but pictures in which the subject(s) fill most of the frame are more interesting.
- The face of your subject shouldn’t be tiny and unrecognizable, unless this photo is for a situation where you can’t show the subject’s face.
- Always carry an extra set of batteries.

Captions

Each photo must have a caption – both in your newsletter and when you send your photos elsewhere for publication. Captions should be one or two sentences describing the contents of the photo. Remember that articles are more interesting with more photos. Photos can make people want to read the article they illustrate, and some people only look at photos. Photos should show what an article is about or why people enjoyed an event. Try to capture a variety of people – readers will quickly tire of photos presenting a “who’s who” of important guests.

Submitting Photos

When sending photos to your conference or any other publication, send original photos. Photocopies and computer printouts will not look good in print. Your conference communication director will give you instructions for submitting photos.

Photo Permissions

As you take pictures to document events and record your church’s news, exercise caution when photographing children – especially children from the community. While there are no legal restrictions, parents do not appreciate strangers taking their children’s picture. It is best to get permission from parents before photographing children from any of your church’s events such as VBS or Adventurer Club activities. The general rule for event photographers taking pictures of children is to use three or more children in a photo to take the emphasis off one child.

The Office of General Council for the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has created a statement about using photos (particularly on websites):

“Recognizable images of individuals that will be used on Web sites may only be used after obtaining the written authorization of the subject. If you would like to include images of individuals on your site, please download a copy of the NAD Image Release and have it signed by the subject in the image, or if the individual is a minor, by the minor’s legal guardian before posting the image. Releases are generally not required for newsworthy criticism or comment; however if you are not a professional used to making such judgments, we would advise you to seek legal counsel in order to avoid copyright infringement or invasion of privacy claims. Releases are also not generally required from people who are identifiable in a photo of a street or public place as long as the photograph is related to the subject matter of the article AND the identifiable people are NOT the focus of the photo.”

Problems can be avoided by simply asking all parents and guardians to sign a photo permission form annually or while registering for events such as Vacation

Bible School. To download a copy of the North American Division's image release form, go to <http://help.adventistchurchconnect.com> and type "Image Release Form" into the search bar.

For more information on this topic, visit www.adventsource.org and type "News Photo Permissions" into the search bar.

Online Communication

Church Websites

A church website provides many opportunities for communicating with members and reaching the community. A church without a website simply does not exist to many people. Visitors want to know how to find your church, when Sabbath school and church start, what activities are available for their children, and what to expect, and members want to know the latest news and events.

The North American Division provides free websites to all churches and schools in Bermuda, Canada, and the United States through Adventist Church Connect and Adventist School Connect. Sites include free hosting, setup, and support, and are maintained through a content management system. Choose from a selection of professionally designed templates or work with a designer for a personalized appearance. Free modules include email newsletters, chat, member directory, guest book, and more. Visit www.adventistchurchconnect.com for more information and to sign up.

Evaluating Your Website

1. **Does the home page load in a timely fashion?** Less than 10 seconds is excellent. If it takes too long, visitors won't wait.
 2. **Is the home page understandable?** Are the features easy to find and well presented? Are there many broken links, missing sections, or spelling errors?
 3. **Are the navigation options logical?** Do all pages include well-designed navigation, with little scrolling required? Are the navigation links adequate?
 4. **Does the website contain information about your church?** Does it include ministries, events, and the pastor's bio? How much information does it offer potential visitors?
 5. **Is the content up-to-date?** Are future events announced? Is the news new, or more than two months old?
 6. **Is contact information available?** Can visitors find the address, phone number, email address, and map link? If they can't find this on your website, they won't be able to find your church.
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7. **Are meeting and worship times clearly posted?** Are they easy to find? Are special events listed?
8. **Do the colors and overall design complement each other?** Are the colors and design pleasant? Do they look professional and give a positive impression of your church?
9. **Does the site include an evangelism component?** Is it warm and inviting, with Bible study information? Does it encourage cyber visitors to become Sabbath morning visitors?
10. **Is the content easy to read?** How is the grammar, spelling, and punctuation? Poorly written content is hard to follow and will not make people want to revisit your site.
11. **Does the site help eliminate confusion about Adventists?** Does it present mainstream Adventist theology? Does it avoid using jargon that would confuse visitors?

Social Networking Websites

Social networking is a useful tool for communicators. Creating a profile for your church on popular social networking websites gives your church and community more options for staying in touch and receiving information. Find popular sites and create profiles for your church. Be sure to keep your profiles updated and active.

Blogs

Does your pastor or a representative from your church blog? Blogs are a great way to show people what's going on in your church. They also make the pastor more accessible and give visitors an insider's view of your church.

Your blog doesn't necessarily need to be related to a traditional ministry. Do you have a hobby you enjoy like cooking or gardening? Many people would be interested in reading and this will provide an open door to your church.

Media Relations

Community Newspapers

There are several ways your church can be featured in newspapers: a reporter can write a feature story, you can be listed on the community calendar, and you can pay for ad space.

Feature Stories

Study your community's paper to see what types of events are covered and start sending press releases to the appropriate editor. Editors are looking for your press release to convey timeliness, proximity, and impact. Your story must be current, it must be in the locale covered by the newspaper, and it must have a concrete impact on the community.

Don't be discouraged if your press releases seem to go unnoticed. With limited space, more urgent news can take precedence. As you continue to send press releases, remember that repetition creates recognition.

Good Story Ideas for Community Media

By Celeste Ryan Blyden

Reprinted with permission from the Columbia Union Conference

- Pastor is leaving; new pastor to arrive
- Adventist Community Services responds to a disaster, starts new program
- Church/organization anniversary, ground breaking, or mortgage burning
- Awards given to or received from community

Press Release Layout

For immediate release

Date

Contact

Telephone number

Email

Headline in caps

1st paragraph: Who, what, when, where, why, how

2nd paragraph: Why your news is important

3rd paragraph: Quotes from key figures

4th paragraph: Registration, contact information, and for more information

5th paragraph: Background information on your organization

- Mission or service trip locally or abroad
- Camp meeting, General Conference session, or other major event
- Local angles to national stories
- Church provides unique needs-based program (i.e. cooking class, health fair, financial seminar, concert, famous guest speaker, etc.)

Community Calendar

Many newspapers feature a community calendar that shows upcoming events. Contact your community newspaper office to learn how your church's events can be listed on the calendar.

Advertising

Check with your community newspaper's ad manager to learn the cost of advertising. Find out how much it costs to purchase ads in different sizes. Smaller ads can work as well as larger ones, and you can have more money left over to run more ads. People remember through repetition, so run ads for a few weeks.

Radio and TV Announcements

Some radio and TV stations will air ads from a non-profit or government agency for free that would be of interest to the public. These public service announcements (PSAs) generally highlight something for the greater good. Quality announcements can cost a lot to produce, though you should check with local stations to see what in-house recording options are available.

PSAs are aired most often on public access channels of cable television stations. Call your cable company and ask if they sponsor a public access channel. Larger companies will have a coordinator who can send you information about available channels and time slots.

To learn more about getting airtime in your community's media, visit the Adventist Media Center's website at www.sdamedia.org.

Public Relations

Below is a starting point for evaluating public relations at your church, adapted from *The Church as a Communicator*. This resource is available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525.

Television Commercials

The North American Division has created a selection of television commercials you can use on local television stations. For more information visit www.adventsource.org or call 800-328-0525.

Proper Signage

Is your sign lit at night? Does it contain the Adventist logo, service times, and a phone number? Is it time for a new sign? Visit www.adventmall.com for sign options.

Literature Rack

Examine your church's literature rack. Is it neat? Is the literature current? Outdated literature will not make a favorable impression. Instead of ordering a lifetime supply of brochures, order enough to get by for a year or two. By the time you need to order more, the church will have produced brochures with new designs. Updated literature is available from the Adventist Book Center at www.adventistbookcenter.com or 800-765-6955.

Answering Machine Message

Is your message current? Does it identify your church as Seventh-day Adventist? Does it pick up after a reasonable amount of rings? Does it list the pastor's office hours? Who checks the messages and how often? Messages left over the weekend should be returned on the next business day. No messages left on a weekday should go unreturned for more than 24 hours.

Church Email Account

Make sure someone checks the church's main email account at least a couple times a week and promptly answers all inquiries.

Participate in Community Events

Why not sponsor a Relay for Life team or a booth at the county fair? Offer classes the community would be interested in, such as vegetarian cooking, scrap booking, or fitness. Consider hosting support groups for new parents or people who are grieving a loss, or letting community groups host meetings in your church. Hosting and participating in the community will help raise your church's profile.

Directory Listings

Does your church have a display ad in the phone book for people who flip to the church section? What about travel books and hotel directories? Research what options exist in your town, and get your church listed.

What Is a Seventh-day Adventist? Brochure

What Is a Seventh-day Adventist? is an up-to-date, attractive resource that offers insight into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In eight colorful panels, this brochure defines who Adventists are, and what Adventists believe. This brochure also includes a short history of Adventism and updated membership and outreach statistics.

This brochure is available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525.

Catalog #250010

Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource. For a complete list visit www.adventsource.org or call 800-328-0525.



Adventist Notecards

Prepared by the NAD Office of Communication

These attractive notecards feature the Seventh-day Adventist name and logo on the cover. The inside is blank for your message. Envelopes are included.

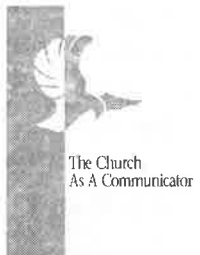
Catalog #250015



Adventist Press Kit Folder

This glossy press kit folder includes images of Adventist media makers and the church logo. Simply insert your press releases, media announcements, etc. to assemble a professional kit. Make a notable impression!

Catalog #250100

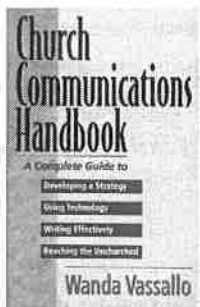


The Church as a Communicator

Prepared by the NAD Office of Communication

This 20-page booklet helps analyze how your church communicates with visitors. The goal is to have every church send warm verbal and non-verbal messages to visitors and potential members.

Catalog #250070



Church Communications Handbook

By Wanda Vassallo

This is the perfect handbook for pastors and communication directors in the local church. Use this book to develop an overall plan and provide examples of how to communicate effectively with members and reach the unchurched. Find advice on advertising, media relations, websites, and more.

Catalog #250005



Passport

Passport is a free quarterly newsletter filled with valuable articles and tips to help with your ministry. To sign up, visit www.adventsource.org and type "Passport" into the search bar.

Society of Adventist Communicators

The Society of Adventist Communicators is an organization for the socialization, continuing education, recognition, and nurture of Seventh-day Adventists whose careers are in fields of communication. Who should join: Adventist communication professionals, students, freelancers, editors, teachers, technology specialists, administrators, producers, photographers, small business owners, and others from North America and beyond – in all fields: broadcasting, marketing/public relations, print/publishing, electronic media, education, health care, and more. The Society of Adventist Communicators hosts an annual convention for members. Visit www.adventistcommunicator.org for more information.

Practicing Communicating

Practicing Communicating is a free monthly newsletter produced by the Society of Adventist Communicators and North American Division Communication Department. Visit www.adventistcommunicator.org to sign up.

Websites

The Adventist Channel <http://sda.biggytv.com>

Advent Mall www.adventmall.com

The Barna Group www.barna.org

Communication Representative Ministry Description

Introduction

It's true that communication is central to every aspect of our local church structure today, technically making every leader in the church a communicator. But as the appointed communication leader, your role in ministry is specifically defined to ensure that members are kept informed and the church is properly represented to the public. Following are the four areas that encompass your ministry as communication leader in the local church:

Public Relations

As communication leader, you are responsible for building, monitoring, and protecting the image of your local church and its name within your community.

To do this effectively: Ensure that the church is identified by an exterior sign appropriate to the building's architecture and check the church's appearance regularly for problems needing attention. Arrange for the identification of the church through listings in local telephone directories, tourist publications, highway signs, and hotels and motels. Arrange for church representation at exhibits and fairs, in parades, and at other community events. Build and nurture relationships with community leaders, clubs, and organizations, and encourage increased church involvement and support in the community when and where appropriate.

Try this: Develop and maintain a church website; join a communication association like the Society of Adventist Communicators and the Religious Communication Council; supply the *What Is a Seventh-day Adventist?* brochure and booklets to members for distribution to friends, work associates, and community leaders.

Media Relations

Your objective is to raise public awareness of our church – its members, its mission, and its message; work to get church activities and events noted in the media; and help to get the church's views included in the news adequately and accurately.

To do this effectively: Report church activities to local radio, television, and newspapers by submitting news releases and public service announcements, arranging for interviews, writing letters to the editor on matters of concern to the church, writing or assigning feature stories or columns, arranging for photo coverage of congregational activities or events, and serving as a source of information for public media representatives. Look for opportunities, story ideas, and current issues that concern your church and community. Seek to become personally acquainted with

newspaper editors, broadcast assignment editors, religion reporters, and community relations personnel. Develop initial contacts with press kits, nurture contacts with phone calls, and follow up contacts with hand-written note cards.

Try this: Develop and maintain a local media contact list; seek coverage of camp meeting, a health fair, or a Pathfinder event that benefits kids or the community; send your contacts Christmas cards from your church.

News and Information

It's vital to keep church members informed about upcoming activities, and equally important to share church news with conference communication directors and the larger Adventist family.

To do this effectively: Publish a regular newsletter with photos, articles, and input from members and/or submit articles and photos to conference communication directors for conference newsletters or sections in union papers. Maintain an attractive bulletin board in the church lobby highlighting church activities, news, photos, and developments.

Try this: Send sick, shut-in, and missing members copies of the church newsletter or bulletin. Publish a church pictorial directory paid for by ads from community businesses and church well-wishers.

Advertising and Promotion

One of your most important responsibilities is to strategically promote all church programs and evangelism campaigns to attract attendance.

To do this effectively: Regularly consult with the pastor and departmental leaders about events and activities they are planning. Assist them with the creation and placement of brochures, flyers, direct mail, broadcast and print ads, and other promotional ideas. Professionally prepared advertising materials are available for many programs, as are public relations and advertising agencies for consultation.

Try this: Ask a college student member whose talent is graphic arts to design your flyers, brochures, and ads; invite members who work in communication by profession to help develop an advertising campaign for your next evangelism effort or church project.

Communication Director

This Quick Start Guide for Communication Directors is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry in your church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or a seasoned volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series:

- Web Ministry
- Elder
- Church Board

For a complete listing of Quick Start Guide titles visit www.adventsource.org



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ISBN: 978-1-57756-306-8



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