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# Public Relations During A **PANDEMIC**

THE IMPORTANCE OF A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

By Karen Sekora





It has been impossible to escape the reality of 2020 and its unprecedented time in our country. The quiet streets caused by “social distancing” and the 24/7 news reports bringing us the latest updates with developments here in America and around the world have consumed both television news and social media. Churches and companies have been forced to adapt to changes quickly. They have been forced to move church services online, while many companies either closed their doors temporarily or moved their staff to full-time remote work until restrictions are lifted.

For a select group of businesses considered essential and life-sustaining, which include those in healthcare and grocery stores, their doors have remained open as they continue to serve our communities.

As we find—and transition to—what is our new normal, it is an uncertain time for all of us, and the importance of effective and clear communication is at an all-time high. Your organization should focus on communication between you and your stakeholders, employees, target audience, and overall community.

But I must ask: ***How effective has your organization’s communication been during the COVID-19 crisis?***

A crisis is any situation that challenges the reputation of your organization, or clients, donors, or individuals associated with your organization. Whether it is directly or indirectly, your organization’s reaction and response to the situation will directly impact your brand.

Unfortunately, this will not be the only crisis your organization will face. At some point, something unexpected will happen. Perhaps and hopefully not to the degree of COVID-19, but it is important to take the time to prepare before it happens to ensure a stronger and more effective response. A proactive approach will serve your organization and your brand well. Here are four key strategies for effective Crisis Management:

### **Be Prepared**

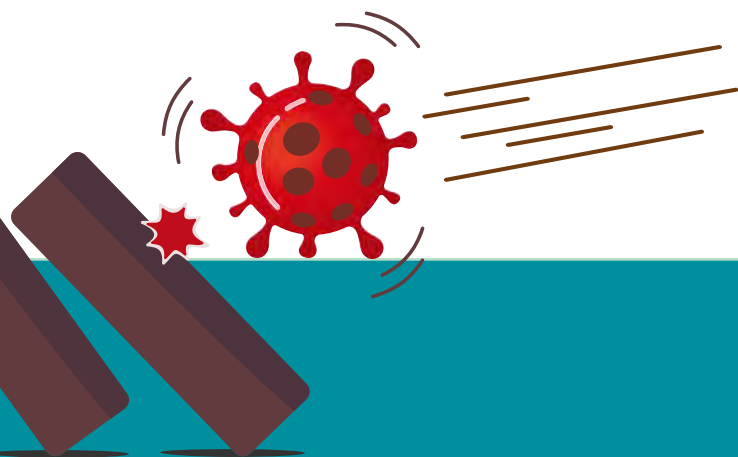
Take the time to be proactive and get ahead of the story. The time spent planning for what might happen will help to streamline your response and protect your brand when a crisis happens.

- Assemble a Crisis Communications Team
- Brainstorm with your team all possible crisis scenarios—if it can go wrong, it will go wrong
- Designate a spokesperson to ensure consistency in your communication
- Train your team on what their specific response will be based on their title/role within the organization

Planning ensures that everyone in your organization is on the same page, making your response more effective.

### **Act Quickly**

Get ahead of the situation as quickly as possible to help diffuse negative response. Apologize, if necessary, and communicate effectively. The longer it takes for your organization to respond, the harder it will be to overcome all negative thoughts and feelings regarding the situation.





**PLANNING ENSURES  
THAT EVERYONE IN YOUR  
ORGANIZATION IS ON THE  
SAME PAGE, MAKING  
YOUR RESPONSE MORE  
EFFECTIVE.**

### **Monitor Social Media and Other Messages**

Keep a pulse on social media and other media outlet responses in order to stay ahead of the story. You can communicate most effectively when you know what is being said and by whom.

It is okay to **over-communicate** during a crisis. People crave information and connection.

### **Be Transparent and Accountable**

Be honest in your response. The best way to rebuild and maintain trust is to be honest and transparent throughout the situation. Acknowledge what has happened, accept responsibility, and communicate the steps your organization will take to move forward.

It is important that your employees, stakeholders, and volunteers hear directly from you first. Ensure that everyone within your organization understands your message and its impact so that all communications, internally and externally, are consistent.

Designate a spokesperson or a team of people who will communicate your message externally. It is a good idea to have a team of at least two or three people cross-trained in case something happens to your spokesperson, or as an effort to communicate

to a greater number of people more quickly and effectively.

Crisis situations are impossible to predict and can happen at any time to any organization. Take the time to work with your team to create a best practice for these situations and have a Crisis Management Plan in place.

If you do not have a Crisis Management Plan in place, it is not too late. Take the time now to create one that you can expand upon later. It is best to be as proactive as possible, even if you are reacting to a crisis. **1**



**Karen Sekora**  
Public Relations Specialist

*An expert at getting things done, Karen excels in utilizing her communication talents to cultivate client and media relationships.*

# DIRECT MAIL'S

**NOT**

# DEAD

**The data is undeniable.  
Direct mail is still effective!**

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# 5 Easy Steps

## TO BOOST YOUR YEAR-END GIVING

By Darrell Law



As we enter the last quarter of the year, we should begin planning how to maximize our year-end giving.

For many nonprofits and ministries, the majority of their annual donations are received in the last three months of the year. However, there's a lot of competition vying for those precious dollars, and it's getting tougher each year.

This is why I have prepared a checklist to help you boost your year-end giving:

### 1. Start Early

Get ahead of all the other ministries and nonprofits who will send out appeals asking for donations. Remember, asking for a year-end gift is a process, not a one-time event, so start now!

### 2. Make a Plan

Benjamin Franklin supposedly once said, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." Some nonprofits indiscriminately ask for donations, hoping their pleas for support will be answered.

Do not fall victim to the tyranny of urgency when it comes to your fundraising goals. It takes a thoughtful, strategic plan to maximize your year-end efforts.

Put together a fundraising plan that outlines what you will say, the stories you will share, the platforms you will use (e.g., email, direct mail, Facebook, newsletter), and what your ask will be over the next several weeks. This plan will also assist others in your organization to rally around it and help you execute it.

*Be sure to include Giving Tuesday in your plan — December 1.*

### 3. Utilize Multiple Platforms

Starting early allows you the opportunity to engage multiple platforms like direct mail, social media, email blasts, text-to-give campaigns, phone calls, etc. You should not rely on just one method to engage your donors. Some donors like to receive content from your organization one way but prefer to give using a different channel.

For example, I like sitting down to read a letter from a ministry describing the impact



they are making and reading the beautiful story of a changed life. However, my preferred way to give a gift is to go online, while another donor may prefer to send their gift in the mail or call in.

Be sure to communicate with your donors through all your platforms and provide multiple ways to give. Donors like the

sincere gratitude and appreciation to donors through your online thank-you page, the autoresponding email, and the hard copy letter you mail out. And, I recommend you do all three!

It never hurts for the donor to hear you say “thank you” multiple times. Plus, receiving a thank-you receipt letter allows you to ask

## It's important to remind the donor how their gift will make a difference, because it prepares the donor to give again.

freedom to choose, so give them the ability to decide how they prefer to respond.

### 4. Make Giving Super Easy!

Are you asking for too much information on your online donation form? Is the page laid out effectively? Do you offer PayPal as a giving option?

For security reasons and ease, some people like PayPal because they do not have to provide their credit card information to give a gift. For multiple clients, adding PayPal as a giving option on the online donation page caused an overall lift in revenue. About 30% of the donations for one of our clients comes through PayPal.

If PayPal is not already a giving option, you may want to consider adding it.

Also, do a review of your online donation pages. Your current online form may be hurting your results. The form should be simple and only ask for the required information to process the donation. 54% of nonprofit emails are read on mobile so be sure your online donation form is mobile-friendly.

### 5. Say “Thank You” Often

“THANK YOU” – the power in these two words cannot be overstated. Express your

for another gift—be sure to enclose a return envelope to make it easy for the donor to mail it back.

In your communications, share how the gift will be used to fulfill the mission of the organization, such as providing a warm meal to the homeless, digging a well in the Congo, or sending a Bible to a new believer in China. It's important to remind the donor how their gift will make a difference, because it prepares the donor to give again.

If you are interested in having Infinity Concepts help you boost your year-end or year-round fundraising efforts, then let's talk! Call us today at 724-733-1200. [i](#)



**Darrell Law**  
VP | Chief Growth Officer

*Darrell meticulously oversees all client services to ensure the best possible results for each of the clients of Infinity Concepts.*

## By Jason Dreistadt

As we enter the fall season, it always puts me in the mindset of what I am thankful for. My family, my friends, and my church are all at the top of my list. At Infinity Concepts we are thankful for our staff, our clients, and the opportunity to make a difference in organizations around the world.

What is your organization thankful for? One of the biggest things to be thankful for is your donors, but have you thanked them? Sure, you are probably sending them receipt letters thanking them for their donation, but have you shown them your appreciation? Some people

do banquets or send gifts of appreciation. One other way to approach this is through an Affirmation Letter Series.

An Affirmation Letter Series is a series of several letters to show appreciation to your donors and help them develop a stronger bond with your organization. Here are four things to consider in your letters.

## 1. Appreciate your donors for their contribution

Everybody likes a thank you. I remember sitting down during my Christmas break when

**IF SOMEONE IS NOT THANKED, THEY FEEL UNVALUED  
AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION NOT WORTH ANYTHING.**

I was younger, writing thank-you notes to all of my relatives for my gifts (this was obviously before the rise of email, texting, and social media). A donor who is unappreciated is a donor who disengages. If someone is not thanked, they feel unvalued and their contribution not worth anything.

## 2. Show your donors the results of their investments

It is always beneficial to talk about what donors' money is doing. How has your organization been a good steward of their investment? Tell them. How many children did you feed? What outreaches did you conduct? What is the expanded reach of your broadcast? It is important to help the donor feel that they are a vital component of your ministry.

## 3. Share stories of changed lives because of their investment

One of the ways to share the results of their investment is by relating a story of a changed life. Personal testimonies are always an encouragement. By telling the story of one person, it brings a deeper connection between the donor and what you do. You may have helped thousands of people, but when you tell the story of one person, it is more relatable.

## 4. Affirm the desired behavior of your donors

What is the desired behavior? Is it to give more regularly or is it to give a larger one-time gift? Is it to have people enroll in a recurring auto-debit campaign? Once you have determined your primary desired behavior, begin to positively reinforce that behavior in order to garner their trust and continued support.

This year, make an intentional effort to appreciate your donors for their contributions, prayer, and support. **i**



**Jason Dreistadt**  
VP | Chief Operations & Creative Officer

*Jason is best known as a creative thinker and problem solver, providing insightful resolution to challenges facing the clients he serves.*



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# 6 REASONS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER PODCAST ADVERTISING

By Paul McDonald

What is a podcast? According to the dictionary, a podcast is a digital audio file made available on the Internet for downloading to a computer or mobile device, typically available as a series, new installments of which can be received by subscribers automatically. Basically, it is an on-demand version of talk radio.

Podcasting today is an incredibly fast growing medium. With that exponential growth comes increased opportunity for advertisers to make their mark in the medium.

There are several great reasons to consider advertising in podcasts, even if you've never considered it before.

### **1. More Podcasts Are Being Developed**

According to research data, in March 2020, there were over 1 million podcasts in existence with over 63 million episodes available. By contrast, in 2015, there were only 500,000 active podcasts and 18.5 million episodes.

### **2. More People Are Listening to Podcasts**

The US population is listening to podcasts. Listeners fall in every age group: 43% of Millennials, 37% of Generation Z, 28% of Generation X, 16% of Boomers, and even 16% of the Silent Generation. 56% of all podcast listeners are men, with almost half of all podcast listeners (49%) between the ages of 25-44. As of fall 2019, 51% (144 million) of the US population had listened to a podcast, and 21% listened weekly.

For the last half dozen years, podcast audiences have grown by 20% each year. Even with the bump in the road of the coronavirus, podcast audience numbers are projected to double by 2023. The average podcast listener subscribes to 6 shows and listens to an average of 7 different shows per week (up from 5 in 2017). 80% of podcast listeners stay through most or all of the episode, and weekly listeners spend an average of 6 hours and 37 minutes per week with podcasts.

### **3. Podcast Listeners Have Higher Incomes**

Podcast listeners tend to skew toward higher income levels, with a median income of \$80,000. Podcast listeners were 32% more likely than the general population to earn \$75,000 or more annually, 37% more likely to have annual incomes of at least \$100,000, and 45% more likely to earn \$250,000 or more annually.

YOU  
HAVE  
A STORY  
TO TELL.

WE CAN  
HELP.

THE  
END.

Book Production  
Book Distribution  
Media Relations  
Interviews  
Special Events

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For the last half dozen years, podcast audiences have grown by 20% each year.

#### **4. Podcast Listeners Are More Engaged**

Podcast listeners tend to spend more time on social media than the average person and they are also more likely to follow companies and brands on social media. (94% are active on at least one social media platform vs. 81% for the entire population.) 69% of podcast listeners agreed that podcasts made them more aware of new products and services, and across the board, they declared an increase in intent to purchase after hearing an ad in a podcast.

#### **5. Ad Revenues Are Growing**

Ad revenue has been growing exponentially. In 2015, revenue was at \$69 million. In 2018, that jumped to \$479 million. Ad revenue by 2021 is expected to pass the \$1 billion mark.

#### **6. Advertising Opportunities Are Increasing**

The most common type of ad in a podcast—and arguably the most effective—is the “host-read” ad, a native ad, which means it is generally integrated into the program content. But as ad revenues grow, and



opportunities to cash in on this market also grow, podcasting host sites are experimenting with what they call “dynamic insertion” of ads. This technology allows the publisher to plug in or swap out ads into episode slots at the time of the download rather than at the release of the episode.

What had begun as an opportunity for small advertisers to reach a very dedicated niche market is becoming a place where the bigger brands can now carve a share out of the market as well. A major study of podcasting for the year of 2018 showed that the use of dynamic insertion of ads reached a high of 48.8% of all advertising in podcasts, nearly taking over the more familiar ads “baked in” to the original podcast.

Consider podcast advertising. There are more and more podcasts being developed,

more and more people are listening to them, and those who listen have higher incomes and are more engaged with brands through social media. Ad revenues are growing and advertising opportunities are increasing. Now is the time to explore podcast advertising. **i**



**Paul McDonald**  
Media Strategist

*Paul is our resident media wizard, spending his days diligently putting together the best possible deals on media buys for our clients.*

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# THE GREAT DISRUPTION

By Mark Dreistadt

**The abrupt cessation of in-person worship in churches, synagogues and mosques around the country is one of the most significant sudden disruptions in the practice of religion in U.S. history.**

— Frank Newport, Gallup Poll



**The year 2020 may well become known as the year of the Great Disruption.** Certainly, each of us has felt the impact of COVID-19 on multiple levels. Churches and congregations had to reinvent worship experiences and fellowship opportunities overnight. As I write this article, hundreds of churches across the US and around the world have still not

been able to resume in-person worship services.

While the ripple effects of the global pandemic will continue for

months—or perhaps years—we are all faced with the reality of developing a **new normal**. Terms like disruption, worship shifting, digital metrics, virtual worship, online campus, and interactive ministry will become common terminology in church ministry.

- For individuals, the new normal may include working from home, changing jobs, homeschooling for children, or adjusting routines.
- **For churches, the new normal means embracing a socially-distanced culture and developing effective digital ministry opportunities.**

The need for online ministry has been on the horizon for a long time. At Infinity Concepts we started helping church clients develop online campuses as early as 2012. The COVID-19 pandemic simply put the **digital ministry mandate** on the fast track. In a blog I wrote last November I stated ...

*In the past decade we have seen significant growth in the online community. Today most people have smart phones, high-speed Internet, and spend hours each day in front of the digital screen. This is perhaps one of the reasons we have seen significant growth in churches who have started online*

*ministries—caring for people who watch church services on the web.*

*If the church is to be effective in the coming decades, it must find the people where they are and minister to them in meaningful and relevant ways. It must re-engage the culture as it wishes to be engaged. The message of the Gospel never changes, but in this busy, cluttered, noisy world, our methodology must definitely change.*

*I believe digital communication will lead the way ... church online, streaming video, digital video courses, audio podcasts, and effective social media are all components of the next generation of evangelism and discipleship.*

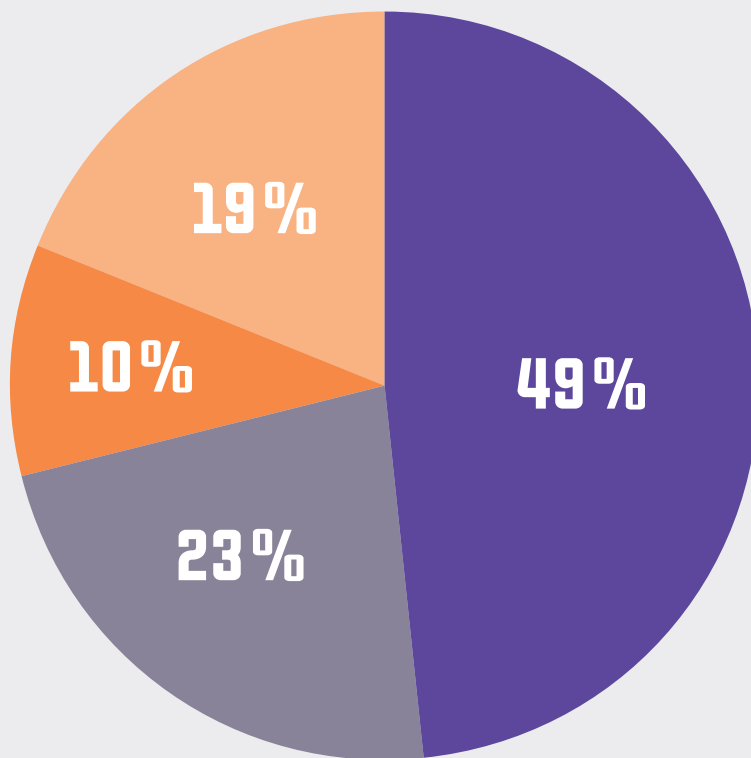
The words I penned less than one year ago are truer today than when I originally wrote them. The trends were clear months ago—but the crisis accelerated the change that was already taking place. Today, an effective digital presence is critical to any church that wants to impact their community for Christ.

Many pastors see online ministry as a temporary “band-aid” until things return to normal. I believe this is a mistake. While some research indicates that a large number of people who previously attended in-person services intend to return ... a significant number of former attenders will not. **Many people who once attended services regularly are now online and will likely stay there.**

Almost half (49%) of regular worshipers appear to have replaced in-person attendance with virtual worship. Another 23% are supplementing in-person attendance with virtual participation, saying that they have been attending less often but watching online instead. Together that represents almost three out of every four 2019 church attenders who are now participating online—while relatively few are returning to in-person attendance.



# US ADULTS WHO REGULARLY ATTENDED RELIGIOUS SERVICES IN 2019\*



- **49%** Substituted virtual participation for in-person attendance
- **23%** Supplemented in-person attendance with virtual participation
- **10%** Attended services in person and did not watch services virtually
- **19%** Neither attended in person nor watched

- Substituted**  
(no in-person / video)
- Supplemented**  
(in-person + video)
- Attended**  
(in-person / no video)
- Neither**  
(no in-person / no video)

*\*Pew Research Center Study, August 7, 2020*

It is clear that the church must take digital ministry seriously and focus on ways to engage people online. This is the only way to continue to minister to many previous attenders. Plus, it provides new opportunities for outreach and evangelism. Through online ministry, a pastor can reach exponentially more than they can at their physical location.

It is interesting to note what former attenders are watching online:

- **40%** have only watched the church they attend
- **30%** say they have watched the church they attend AND other churches
- **29%** say they have watched other churches—but not their own.

This means that six out of ten (60%) virtual worshipers are visiting new churches. That represents tens of thousands who are looking for a new online worship experience.

However, one of the most troubling insights that the data is telling us is that churches are not connecting with new people. Most churches that have experienced a significant uptick in online participation have not successfully identified and engaged the people who are looking for answers online.

In this season of transition to online worship, leaders must do all they can to eliminate friction points in the online experience. While an individual is unlikely to get up and walk out of an in-person worship service, they can leave online with the click of a button.

A church's website and Facebook page are the gateways to this eager audience, yet many websites are not mobile friendly and are confusing to navigate. The website should provide easy access to key information an online visitor is searching for.

I recently watched an online service from a megachurch and wanted to learn about the excellent teacher I was listening to. To my frustration, I could find nothing on the entire website about their pastors or leadership. Every church should ensure things like pastors, locations, media access, beliefs, and programs are all easy to find.

In this new disrupted digital culture, YouTube and Facebook have become the preferred platforms for ministry, evangelism, and discipleship (see chart on page 21). While Facebook is the undisputed king of social media, YouTube is one of the best ways to reach people. YouTube focuses solely on

video. Every church should actively produce video content. People love it.

If your church has a heart for the next generation, YouTube is the place to be. Over 80% of all 15–25-year-olds in the United States watch an average of over six videos per visit on YouTube.

Most American teenagers will say they are Christian, but 32% say they are religiously unaffiliated—meaning they have no church home. It is easy to understand the opportunities online video provides for ministry, evangelism, and discipleship.

According to Lifeway Research, 66% of young adults in the US who attended a Protestant church regularly as a teenager say they dropped out for at least a year between the ages of 18 and 22. Among those who dropped out, 31% returned as regular attenders, 39% attend church once a month

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or less, and 29% do not currently attend at all. **Losing 69% of our active young adult believers should not be an acceptable statistic for any church.**

How do we reverse this challenging trend? How can we keep people of all ages engaged in the things of God? I believe relevant and effective online ministry is one of the most important keys. Here are a few tips to help you focus your ministry efforts online to facilitate effective and life-changing ministry.

- **Recognize that digital is here to stay.** Please consider that **digital is now the church's primary ministry platform.** You can reach far more people online than during the Sunday service. Your online ministry can be used for evangelism

clubs that share common interests or have common needs. Use your website and Facebook to cultivate deeper engagement. Be sure your website delivers content for effective communication—and be sure your Facebook posts are relevant, current, and consistent.

- **Watch the metrics.** One of the advantages of online ministry is that everything is measurable. Below are **Ten Digital Ministry Metrics** I recommend that you monitor and work to optimize:
  1. One-minute views on Facebook, YouTube, and streaming on the church website
  2. Average watch time on all platforms

**Numbers matter because people matter.  
If you care about people,  
you'll care about numbers.**  
—Carey Nieuwhof, [www.careynieuwhof.com](http://www.careynieuwhof.com)

and discipleship. This is a critical and disruptive ministry shift. It means you will need to change the way you think—the way you staff your ministry team—the way you communicate the Gospel.

- **Give people tools for spiritual growth.** I often talk about “takeaways” with our clients. Each online engagement needs to have a clear takeaway for the viewer—a practical insight or resource that will equip them in their personal spiritual journey. These resources might include topical videos, music videos, infographics, downloadable documents, and other tools.
- **Discover ways to connect online.** Believers need to interact with other believers. Create groups, cells, and

3. Audience Retention (metrics available on Facebook and YouTube)
4. Likes
5. Comments (be sure to promptly reply)
6. Shares
7. Subscribes
8. Decisions (salvation, baptism, new viewer, etc.)
9. Live Interactions (texting for prayer, info, decisions, etc.)
10. Donations

- **Clarify your ministry strategy.** I once had a client who engaged us to help him start a marriage ministry. After a  
*(continued on page 30)*























# FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE FAST FACTS

## FOR YOUR MINISTRY

# facebook

# You Tube

-  Most popular social media platform
-  2.60 billion monthly users worldwide
-  1.49 billion daily users
-  96% access on mobile device
-  69% of US adults use Facebook
-  Average viewing session is just under 5 minutes
-  Users on site an average of 20 minutes daily
-  500,000 new users every day
-  245,000 photos are uploaded every minute
-  Average number of “Friends” is 338
-  Second most popular social media platform
-  2 billion monthly users worldwide
-  30 million daily users
-  70% of views from mobile devices
-  73% of US adults use YouTube
-  Average viewing session is over 11 minutes
-  Users watch an average of 6.5 videos per visit
-  5 billion videos viewed daily
-  500 hours of video uploaded every minute
-  81% of 15–25-year-olds in the US use YouTube





**HOW TO SPEAK ON A**

**DIVISIVE**







# TOPIC

## WITHOUT KILLING YOUR BRAND

In 2020, we live in a world that is dominated by communication platforms such as social media, the Internet, and 24/7 news. Now, more than ever, people are using their voices to speak out on a multitude of divisive issues, no longer afraid to speak up or take a stand. These sometimes extreme opinions dominate our daily conversations. Whether it is around the water cooler at the office, written in a blog post, posted in a social media group, or in an interview on the local news station, there has been a shift in our culture and it continues to change rapidly.

Most likely, you have noticed that brands are speaking out on controversial topics at an elevated rate lately. And, while some have earned the ardent backing of their supporters or customers through the controversy, others have fallen flat, or even turned their supporters against them.

With the rise of Millennials as consumers, their voice and their buying power gets stronger every day. Understanding this increasingly powerful consumer group is becoming imperative to the success of businesses. And, for organizations that like to speak to current topics, they



have a distinct advantage—Millennials value and reward organizations who sincerely speak their minds.

Something to consider, however, is that not everyone views transparency as a positive thing. Many will expect you to “stay in your lane” and stick to what it is that your organization is best known for or is best at doing.

There is no way to make everyone happy, especially when speaking out on a

You might possibly be looking to shake things up a bit or to get your name mentioned. Unless you have a true commitment to an issue, steer clear of statements under these circumstances. Many will be able to see through the sentiment and see it as a stunt which will certainly hurt you and your organization.

A burning internal conviction to speak up could be your driving force and this is the most impactful way to speak out. Your heart on the matter will be evident and those who

**NOW, MORE THAN EVER, PEOPLE ARE USING THEIR VOICES TO SPEAK OUT ON A MULTITUDE OF DIVISIVE ISSUES, NO LONGER AFRAID TO SPEAK UP OR TAKE A STAND.**

controversial topic. But there are ways to win over your current base and bring some new supporters into the fold. As long as you carefully, thoughtfully and prayerfully develop your position and statement.

### **Questions you should ask before speaking out:**

#### ***Why am I doing this?***

Maybe you are at a speaking engagement and at the end of the speech someone asks you a pointed question. This is either the most dangerous or potentially most opportune time to make a statement. If you are prepared and have thought it through, it could make an enormously positive impact for your organization. However, if you are caught off guard and speak too quickly, you will be held to this statement for a very long time.

agree with your vantage point will be happy to jump on your ship to throw their support your way.

#### ***Does this benefit my audience?***

You must be confident in who your audience is prior to taking a stand on a divisive topic. If you passionately speak your mind on a subject and your followers traditionally take the opposite viewpoint, you will certainly anger them and lose their loyalty and most likely their business.

If your opinion-filled statement has no connection to the values of your customers, it will be detrimental. It is likely that some demographic or group will disagree with your stance, but if you anger your support base, there will be a long-felt regret for your organization.

***Am I prepared to stand by my words?***

When taking a stand, you will possibly be asked many times to confirm, back up or explain what you have said. If you deviate from that original statement, you and your organization will feel the repercussions. Sometimes the only thing worse than offering a poorly thought-out statement on a controversial topic is to backtrack on that assertion at a later date. Be confident in your stance.

***Can I humble myself enough to be empathetic to the opposing view?***

There obviously will be times you speak up when there is clearly a right and a wrong side. But, more often than not, there is an equally passionate viewpoint facing you down. Before making your statement, place yourself in their position and try to understand why it is that they believe what they do. Approaching your opinion from a point of

empathy and understanding will only make your voice more powerful and trustworthy. Shouting opinions without concern for the feelings or impact on another person is a loss for everyone involved. When you speak not just from your heart, but with God's heart, real impact can occur.

As a ministry, organizational or corporate leader, your opinion matters. However, without careful consideration and a thoughtful plan, standing up for your beliefs in a controversial situation is not easily navigable. Be confident in your words, but cautious in the delivery. **i**

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# 7 "Lacks"

*That May Be Hindering*  
**Your Organization**



By Jason Dreistadt



# ***Oftentimes in an organization, projects get lost, despite the best intentions of everyone involved.***

And no one can quite put their finger on what happened. Below are seven “lacks” that might hinder a project. See which one might be affecting your organization.

## **1. Lack of Clear Vision**

When an initiative is brought up, be sure that everyone is on the same page with what the deliverables are. It is one thing to have a great idea, but what will that idea accomplish? Talk about what it will look like ... what are the benefits ... what will people experience as a result.

## **2. Lack of Process**

Now that the scope and deliverable is established, determining the steps to accomplish that goal is key. Without a clear plan, the project will meander, get off budget, and never come to fruition. Determine the best approach to each step along the way and what the best practices are moving forward.

## **3. Lack of Ownership**

Another issue facing organizations is determining who is responsible for the project. Once a vision is cast and the steps are placed in order, someone has to be the “champion” of the cause. Without a clear person owning the project, it’s easy for things to get off track. Not everyone can handle this, so make sure that the person in charge of the project has the right personality, motives, and ability.

## **4. Lack of Perspective**

Sometimes it’s good to take a step back and see what’s going on to avoid a “can’t see the forest for the trees” scenario. It’s easy to get so lost in the details that the original vision can get lost. Having an outside objective viewpoint from someone else can give a fresh perspective.

## **5. Lack of Commitment**

As the project progresses, it is possible to second-guess the motives and initiative by worrying about what others might think. There are always naysayers to any project. Bring some of these people into the loop early on in the process to get them on board, not necessarily to get their input on the project, but to help establish their buy-in.

## **6. Lack of Patience**

Then there is the issue of having a great idea with a lot of excitement, and out of the blue, it needs to be done by next Tuesday when it would normally take three months. Be sure that clear timelines are established from the onset, and periodic updates are being communicated.

## **7. Lack of Funding**

The Bible says in Luke 14 to “count the cost” before you begin. Check to make sure that there are sufficient finances to handle the project. Perhaps some additional fundraising or shifting of budgets have to be made. Or perhaps it means that this project needs to be postponed until later. It is better to wait to start until the time is right than it is to lose momentum midstream.

While the above “lacks” are not exhaustive, they are a good place to start if you are having difficulty keeping things on track. **i**



**Jason Dreistadt**  
VP | Chief Operations & Creative Officer

*Jason is best known as a creative thinker and problem solver, providing insightful resolution to challenges facing the clients he serves.*



By George Konetes

*Today, you have 15 seconds to communicate your story, explain the need, show the solution, and inspire people to join with your organization's vision through video on social media.*

There was a day when you had 30 minutes of infomercial time to do the same thing. The idea is daunting, and the transition seems impossible to make. But, not only can this type of video marketing be done, it can be done well.

### **The New Age of Video**

Historically, video required a lot of time, resources, and experienced on-camera talent to produce well. This way of thinking must be dismantled to be effective in digital fundraising. The new age of video is different. It is fast paced, right to the point, and filled with energy. **It is point first, message first, and mobile first.**

Spoken words are not needed, on-camera personnel are not needed, even video footage is not always needed. Still images with captions, transitions, and a music bed can be used to create a highly effective video. It is possible to take even a single photo, animate it, and produce it into a short video.

Facebook tells us that the optimal length for video is now **15 seconds or less**. And the video must communicate 100% of its message with no audio—yet add even more value to users who turn on their audio.

### **Social Video for Fundraising**

I must admit, even I was skeptical at first that



this new method could work for fundraising, specifically new donor acquisition. For years, photos and 60-second videos ruled the day, but I later learned that a photo was not enough, and a 60-second video had too much filler. Believe it or not, I now feel liberated to have an entire 15 seconds at my disposal to tell a story and I appreciate the challenge of limiting the message to its most basic and inspiring elements.

To make this approach work, you need to think more about emotion rather than information. You need excellent images or great video clips, and a good understanding of your target audience.

### Where to Start

Begin with a laser-focused message. You cannot tell your whole story. Instead tell a single piece of your story that is filled with emotion. Begin by using the native Facebook

tools to create a video from seven images or less with very short captions. Give each slide two seconds for a 14-second total run time.

Write the Facebook ad copy to fill in the gaps left by the video. Then use the donation page to give enough information to validate your cause and give people the confidence to act with a small gift. Once everything is done, find the perfect sound bed for the video that adds emotion for anyone who hears it.

And, of course, this is just the beginning of what is possible. [\*\*i\*\*](#)



**George Konetes, PhD**  
Digital Media Strategist

*An expert at using media to impact audience behavior, George oversees digital initiatives at Infinity Concepts to ensure strategic implementation and successful results.*



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few months he decided it should really be family ministry. Later, he said that he was troubled because he was leaving out the singles. By diffusing his focus, he lost momentum and never experienced the anticipated ministry success. Clarify your focus. Define your message and your distinctive style. Think creatively to find simple ways to communicate timeless truth. Focus, clarity, and creativity are the keys.

- **Understand your desired audience.**

Just as it is important to focus your ministry message, it is also important to define your audience. Online ministry gives you the opportunity to segment and target your desired audience like never before. Create communication that effectively engages the people you want to reach. Do not try to reach everyone with one style of communication. Online ministry requires a laser not a shotgun.

- **Focus on engagement.**

In the church we are conditioned in many ways to measure success in terms of attendance. We monitor the largest churches or the fastest growing churches. The logic is simple ... the more people we reach, the more effective our ministry. However, this is not necessarily the case online. Engagement is the key—discipleship is the focus. While building a large audience is important—building a highly engaged audience is even more important.

A massive disruption like we have experienced in 2020 and the chaos that surrounds the new normal in church life means that pastors and Christian leaders must think creatively and passionately pursue engagement in new ways. Disruption is the cradle of innovation, so keep innovating. Don't be afraid to try something new. But always remember, the focus is not more reach (attendance)—the critical focus is on real engagement. This is how disciples are made. **i**



**Mark Dreistadt**

President | CEO & Lead Strategist

*As the founder and President, Mark has a long and distinguished history of transforming organizations through his strategic counsel and blended approach to branding, advertising, fundraising, and media management.*



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