

What is your church saying?



**BRANDING FOR  
CHURCH PLANTERS**

James Dalman

# **Branding for Church Planters**

**A Quick and Easy to Read Manifesto**

**James “Rev Jim” Dalman**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

A person can't produce a book or manual without an acknowledgement or word of thanks (well maybe they can but I have to give praise where it is due) so here it goes:

Thanks to God for allowing me...a jacked up, messy person to be used by Him for His purpose in this world. I am truly thankful for His endless grace and opportunity to serve Him daily. This manual is all because of God and is a gift back to Him.

Thank you to my wife, Donetta, who has encouraged me to finish my projects, kept faith in me, and helped me to stay on track...and who proofs all my work!

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Thank you to you...those who are following God's calling on your life to plant a church and leaping out into the unknown. You are an inspiration and a special breed. Never give up or give in until God tells you to do something different or calls you home. Blessings upon you!



## INTRODUCTION

Church Planting is a calling like no other! It requires much passion and faith. A planter must have commitment and be focused on staying in the race even when people stop coming, stop answering your calls, or avoid you like the plague. You have to have a strong vision of what should be so that it will take you through the challenging times. Starting a church also requires that a planter be innovative. You have to be able to improvise. During the start up, you will have to wear many hats until you develop a team. There are always more things to do than there is time. A planter has to find and build core group members, cast the vision to people in the community, solve technical issues that would be best suited for NASA, deal with insecure and time draining people, and preach the Word. And most of the time a planter has to make things happen on a shoe-string budget and with little help. If you don't know what you are doing (that may be most of us!) then planting can be all the more difficult. The journey is never easy.

The good news is that God is on our side! He never gives us more than we can handle and the reward of being obedient to God's calling is awesome! While there are many unique and trying challenges in planting a church - there is nothing else like it in the world. It doesn't matter if the church is successful or, for whatever reason, happens to fail. I believe that stepping out in faith in order to build God's kingdom will be a great experience either way. I do hope and pray that ALL church plants will be successful (by His standards and not the world's) but the reality is there are many that fail. Whatever situation you might find yourself in, be assured that God works everything out for His glory and those called according to His purpose. I am praying for you!

Now let's get down to the reason for this manual. I know the victories and the defeats firsthand of church planting. I have been involved with three church plants as a core group member, have currently started planting Element 3 Church, and I'm building relationships with church planters all over the United States on a daily basis. We are all in the trenches together. When Paul said that we should "rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn," I know what he was talking about and I think that most of us that are in this boat know too. Though our church names, methodologies, or geographical locations may all be different, we are all bound by Christ and our experience in church planting. We are a "Band of Brothers" and this manual is to help my brothers who are in the trenches.

This short manifesto (if you want to call it that... it sounds kinda cool!) is something that I have been kicking around for several years. Through my interaction and relationships with planters and church planters' training, I have discovered a need for information on branding, design, marketing, and media that would help planters get the basics in these areas and help them make

the right decisions for these needs. I admit that I have been slow getting this book finished. When I intended to complete this there were very few resources available...now the books and interests in church planting and branding have exploded! This is a great thing. However, I have to complete this work because I told God I wanted to give back to Him for all His blessings in my life. This manual was written because of my love and passion for Christ. It is for Him and for you.

I'll wrap up by saying that this manual is just a basic, introductory book on branding and media topics. There are many other in-depth books that I will recommend in the back. And who knows, I may just continue to expand on this one in the future - but the intent was to write something that would be quick and easy to read, informational, and something that you can use TODAY! Church planters are busy people. There are always things to do or fires to put out. This manual is also practical. It keeps in mind the variables unique to church planters such as limited budgets, time constraints, lack of resources, and location changes. While all the ideas and topics may not apply directly to your situation, the information comes from years of experience in the advertising and marketing profession. They will help save you time and money - both of which are precious commodities in our field.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share this with you. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help you or if you have any questions. I am available to you and your ministry!

His servant,

James Dalman  
The Branding Shed

## Chapter 1: THE “FREE” MYTH

I had the opportunity to sit in on a meeting once with a very well known and large church in my town. The church desperately wanted to take their web site and communications materials to a higher level and asked for me to provide some advice. During the meeting we discussed the current problems, their needs, the structure of the communication team and the solutions to make it all happen. We began to discuss the investment it would take and then *it* happened! One of the church members, who was in attendance and was an owner of a local Internet business, jumped in and said his company would offer a cornucopia of services all for free. This guy started throwing out how he loved his church, wanted them to have the best possible web site and that he would provide hosting, back-end solutions, training, and the design all for free...*even* if he had to pay for it with his own tithe money. I was absolutely stunned. The staff member leading the meeting looked as though he had just hit the Jackpot Lotto Power Ball! ***“Well you can’t beat free can you?”***

The problem is not that the guy wanted to help his church (though I question the motive about allocating his tithe money to pay his company) - the problem is that you usually get what you pay for. This person even went on to say he could have the whole web site up in a day. Now he is in the miracle business too! I don’t mean to sound harsh or judgmental; it’s just that I believe the church will probably end up with a bad deal. How can I make such a bold statement? I know from experience. I have sat through countless meetings where someone offers to help for free because they love their organization, they know the “Web-Master 2006” program, or they have a distant relative through marriage who has a junior high kid that works on computers that can do it. I even admit that I made the same mistakes when I started out. The situation almost always ends the same way...the organization seeking help ends up frustrated and worse off than before they started. Why does this situation happen again and again? **Because it’s for FREE!**

Here’s a typical scenario: the person offers to do it at no charge to help out because they really care. Then that person gets busy with life and soon the project becomes last on the list - it is no longer a priority. It takes some time (or forever) before the work gets finished. Their intentions were good and we can definitely understand that life happens, but the organization that needed the work might be left holding an empty bag. Other scenarios can include: the project gets really difficult or overwhelming and it takes so much energy to complete that the worker ends up resenting doing the work for free; or a person that offers to do the work is not experienced enough to do what needs to be done successfully; and then there are just those people who talk the talk and make great promises but fail to follow through. These are only a few situations that I have observed personally and all can lead to negative results and disappointment to either or both

parties involved. Now every once in a while, the situation works out like a great fairy tale and there is a happy ending, but this is the exception and not the norm. I'll say it again, **free is not always the best way to go.**

So what should a church planter do? Am I really proposing that we turn down free web sites, logo identities, brochures, or postcard mailers? Not necessarily, but I am encouraging, for your benefit, that you think through these scenarios and consider the pros and cons of pro-bono or free work. I do have some suggestions that I would like to throw your way.

**If you do have the money: Hire a company that knows what they are doing.**

Hiring a designer or design firm that knows what they are doing and that does it well is never an expense, it's an investment. **I promise you that!** You will save a lot of time, headaches, and money down the road. A good company will desire to take care of your needs and accomplish your project with professional results in a timely manner. See if they offer you benefits and not fluff. If all they talk about is the awards they are winning, how cool and hip their office is, or that they are the latest and greatest - be careful. Not only will their pricing reflect that fancy stuff, they may sell you on whatever benefits them and not you. Awards and offices in and of themselves aren't bad things but the focus should be on you. I recommend viewing their work or portfolio. Does their work reflect who they say they are? Does it look like it was created professionally or by someone who plays with Print Shop Plus? Is the design functional, effective, and eye-catching? Or is it haphazard and boring? Can you picture them doing your work? See if they have testimonials available. Do other church planters or churches recommend them? Who has done work with them? Answers to these questions can give you clues to whether or not they are a good company. Finally, I would say call them and visit. Do they have a genuine interest in and care about you or do you feel like they are just trying to sell you something? Are they listening or just talking? How do they connect with you? These are a lot of questions and things to ponder but doing your homework beforehand will net better results in the long-term and as it is said, "The proof is in the pudding."

**You don't have the money and you absolutely need a freebie:**

There are times when you just don't have any funding - you simply can't even afford a can of SPAM and you have to do what you have to do. Or maybe you feel that you have a better use for the money...like buying some SPAM or the 3-for-1 Raman noodle special so you can actually eat! I know this deal, trust me. I had to eat Army MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) at one time because that is all I had. I was very thankful for Tabasco Sauce! Even in this situation I have some advice:

- If you truly believe or have confidence in the person or company offering to do the work, then go ahead and move forward. If you don't have that confidence, then maybe it will be better to go without for a season and turn them down.
- Make a contract with them to keep accountability and the desired outcome in check. Write out all the expectations and deadlines and stick to them. I know its pro-bono but the structure will be more helpful than harmful.
- Offer to pay them something. A little cash, dinner, sheep, chickens, whatever you can offer, some type of reward, incentive, or appreciation will go a long way. You could even write it in a contract that you will pay them in the future when there is money available.

**Here are a few more excellent ideas that can work for you:**

- Concessions can sometimes be made when hiring a professional. Ask about payment options, church discounts, breaking the project into smaller phases, taking off extra services or products that aren't needed, or discounts for paying in advance. Sometimes the church planter can even do some of the leg work to keep expenses minimal. You don't know until you ask.
- Purchase design files or layouts and find someone who can implement the rest for a lower price. Sometimes you can find a semi-custom design that you can download or purchase and then have a design student finalize it to your needs. It will save them time and you money.
- Go to a design school and see if they need a 'real-world' project to work on. There are many gifted designers just starting their careers that are looking for a chance to break into the field. The only bad thing with this option is inexperience...and sometimes this can be very bad!
- Start with a company like NetMinistry.com, who specializes in setting up ministries with a small budget. While the work might not be custom, you can get started for little upfront investment. You pay a minimal set-up or design fee and then a monthly fee after that.
- See if the company has any semi-custom options that allow you to start with a base design and customize it to your needs. [More on this in Chapter 6].

I will close this chapter by saying that whatever route you decide to go with, don't get caught up in the "something is better than nothing" attitude. I disagree with that. If whatever you do alienates who you are trying to reach because it is ineffective, irrelevant, unfocused, and even ugly, then sometimes you really are better off with nothing. Do it right the first time if at all possible. It doesn't matter if it is paid for or free - just do your best to do it right.

Oh yeah...what became of our super hero friend and the church that won the Power Ball at the beginning of this chapter? The last I heard there were many unhappy people trying to work through some web design carnage involved with the project, the company took some of my design ideas and used them without permission, and it took several months to launch an incomplete site. Needless to say it did not go according to the plan. As I said before, free is not always the best way to go.

## Chapter 2: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN EXPERIENCED?

I love Jimi Hendrix music. I don't know why. It could be because of the stories my dad told me about how Jimi used to play at a club across from where he lived or that Jimi died three days after I was born. Maybe it's because I played guitar and had a mullet and was a hippie trapped inside a Gen-X body. It could be other things - but regardless, Jimi Hendrix was something unique, special, and totally different. I appreciate that. Jimi Hendrix really has nothing to do with church planting but he did record a song "Have you ever been experienced?" and though it applied to something different for him, I relate his song title to the topic of our next subject...branding.

**Let's take a quick pop-quiz. What is a brand?**

- A. An intensely heated piece of iron which has some type of design that ranchers use to burn the hide and mark their cattle
- B. A logo identity or design
- C. The image that you communicate through your marketing or promotional materials
- D. The thoughts, feelings, experiences, or image that others think about you

What's your answer? OK, this is a trick question because they are all valid and correct answers; they all tie into branding. I know, all you people from Texas picked "A" and that's alright...after all you're from Texas! But for this chapter and discussion I want to focus on "D" - what people feel when they experience your brand.

I am not going to go into the history of branding and all the other in-depth philosophy of it because it's quite boring and we all have better things to do with our time than get a history lesson. So here's the short version: **Branding is about experience!** It is about how others feel about you and what their experience is involving you (if any). It is about their perception of who you are and what you are about, whether it is true or false. Let me explain.

What do you feel when you think of Starbucks? Is it all about the coffee and the taste or do you feel like you're hip and groovy when you visit their store or lift up their logo emblazoned cup? Would you feel as cool or would you be embarrassed sporting a mug of Wal-Mart java? Personally, when I wake up and need my caffeine fix, Folgers or Starbucks works wonders either way, but when I am in a group of people I feel superior if I hail the green mermaid instead of a store brand. How about Harley Davidson? What do you feel when you think of them? Most people think and feel tough, rebellious, macho, and adventurous. No one is going to think you are a sissy while riding a

HAWG down the freeway. They will admire you - wish that they were the person straddling that mighty machine that says "I ain't no wuss." Harley Davidson bikes are great but they aren't necessarily built better than other bikes...it's all about the brand image. People will even buy HD merchandise even if they don't actually own a HAWG and some of you know what I am talking about! What do you feel when thinking of BMW, Volvo, Target, Wal-Mart, Saks, etc.? The fact is that certain brands give us emotions that make us feel better, tougher, safer, or that we are better than the guy next door. This is what the brand experience is all about and if you can connect with the right emotions of the consumer you will have a place in their mind and heart.

The tricky situation, however, is that you have to connect what you are saying and what you want to communicate to what your audience is hearing, seeing, and feeling. You can develop a sizzlin' logo, tell people your new church rocks and that you are ultra cool, design slick as snot advertising, have a tight sounding band, and even have a launch day with thousands of people present - but if the people don't buy into you and define you the way that you define you, all of your branding efforts are for nothing! Their two cents count and what they *emotionally* feel and experience is the final word. So whatever you say through your branding or communication tools, you better live it as well.

Now you might be thinking that what I am saying is fine if you *are* Starbucks, Harley Davidson, or BMW, but that doesn't apply to churches or ministries. After all, you're not trying to build a brand; you're trying to build God's church. You might also be thinking that what people think and feel about your church plant isn't really all that important because it's God's church and that's ultimately what matters. And for the most part you would be right! You *are* building God's church and what He wants you to do *is* what matters. God will lead people to Himself and no matter how great our branding might be it does not take the place of the transforming love of Jesus Christ. But let me ask you a few questions. Does God give us the people with talents, tools, and resources to work for His kingdom? Do you want to do your absolute best for Him? Is it important for you as a church planter to provide a church that connects with the culture around you and that communicates who you are in a real and authentic way? If you answered yes, then branding your church *does* matter because people associate church with God and we want people to experience God in a real and authentic way! Here is another thing to think about: If you are interacting with live people in any setting, whether it is as an individual, a church, or a business, these people will form an opinion, thought, or feeling about you - they will have an "experience" of you and that will brand an image in their mind. If they are going to brand you anyway why not try to get them to remember you the way you would like them to remember you?

This brings me back to the point that whatever you say through your branding efforts (and this includes more than print or web media) you really need to live it or you risk a very high chance of disconnecting with your audience and generating negative vibes. You definitely don't want to be a negative vibe merchant!

So what do you do with this scenario? After all, if branding is really about the thoughts, feelings, experiences, or image that *others* think about you then you are bound to mess that up at times because no one this side of heaven is perfect. This is a tough gig because you can go through a long process of defining who you are and communicate it clear as day, but your audience still has to experience it. They might agree with you or they might disagree, it can be a Catch-22, but this is what you do: **Do your absolute best to give them exactly what you are talking about.** Even though your audience is going to make their own assumption of who you are and do it quickly, you can take steps to lead them into the right perception of how you want them to think about you. It will take a conscious effort and it involves strategy, development, planning, and good ol' hard work, but if you do your best and do everything in your control, then you've done what you can do and that's better than not doing it at all.

So how do you start? **The first step to getting started with any branding is asking the right questions.** You have to determine what it is that you are about, stand for, and desire to become. What do you want to be remembered for? You will have to take a long, hard, and honest look at the inside and outside of your church and the people involved. What will your church look like? How will people feel when they have visited your new church? Who will want to attend your new church? Why would they want to come back? Will they 'buy' into the vision? It is important that you ask and define questions like these from the very beginning of starting your church (and even if you have already started). Dig deep and really do some soul searching.

I also want to add and encourage you to be true to yourself and the vision that God has given you. Don't try to be the church next door. Be different. So many planters are trying to copy Vintage Faith, Mars Hill, Life Church, Red Sea, and others. These churches are awesome and pastored by great dudes - but those visions are what God has called them to do, not you. Maybe you desire to have similar aspects of these churches but put your own spin on it. Be original because it's going to help people remember who you are. Build your own church, your own brand - not someone else's.

When you've had the opportunity to move through the deep process of defining who you are or want to be, write it all down. Take it to God and ask Him if that is His will for your church. Journal all the details that you can because it will help you communicate your information to your

audience clearly and it will help you stay on course. It will be beneficial to you! (more on this in Chapter 3)

Before I end this chapter on branding, I want to include a few more suggestions and thoughts. These are a some of the big things [not all having to do with design or marketing but important in branding] where I have observed new and existing churches make mistakes and consequentially they are things that turn people off or keep them from returning.

- **Make sure all of your communication and marketing pieces reflect your church accurately and in the present!** Don't sell people on what you don't have. For example, if you are currently a suburbanite church don't use inner city photos in your materials. Don't tell people you are a young, hip, and energetic church if you are conservative, old-style, and boring. This is called the bait and switch technique and it's maddening! You will burn people and tick them off. It can kill a church very quickly. Even if you want to be a certain type of church down the road - show people who you are today. It's alright to *tell* them what your long-term vision is but don't show them if you don't have it. I have been to several churches to study how they do things and who they are. I have picked up brochures or gone to their web sites that paint them as "this" kind of church and when I attended their service it was "that" kind of church. This is very disappointing. Would I go back? Absolutely not! Will I be likely to pass along this bad experience to others who might be searching for "this" kind of church - you bet! Paint the right picture or don't paint it at all. Word of mouth goes a very long way.
- **Excel in the small things.** This may sound simple but I think it is the most overlooked aspect of most church plants. Of course we would all like to launch with a great children's ministry, exceptional worship, an awesome addiction recovery program, and a multitude of excellent small groups. We would love to start off being where we want to end up. But this is not possible - there is only so much you can do - but **there are "small things" you can excel in from the very beginning which are really big things in building your church brand image.** Whatever the size of your team, you must focus on the small stuff. For example, when attending a church planter training seminar in 2004, our team visited a well-known church plant in Detroit, Michigan. We heard great buzz about this church and that we should not miss the opportunity to visit them. When we arrived at their service we couldn't find the area of the school where they were having worship - there wasn't adequate signage to direct us and we had to wander around to find it. When we did find the "Welcome Center" the people stationed there continued to talk amongst themselves and never acknowledged our existence. How is that for a welcome? When we left we

weren't greeted by anyone or thanked for visiting. We were basically on our own. This church was billed as an awesome, community driven church. Our team enjoyed the music and the message, but we did comment that if we were seeking a church in that area that we would never return to that one. Maybe this sounds trite and shallow. Maybe the people weren't trained or prepared or even up to par that day, but that one experience was burned as a bad one in our minds. If we felt that way, how would others feel?

I realize that we won't be perfect and things don't always work as planned. That's life. However, if that church had made as much effort in the small things (i.e. adequate signage, warm and friendly greeters, people who get out of their holy huddles and welcome visitors, providing refreshments, or follow-up) instead putting the effort in dazzling candles, brilliant lights, and a tight service, we may have actually enjoyed being there. Again, I don't mean to sound shallow but I have found out through research that people would rather a church excel in the small stuff instead of the big stuff. If you do that it will make a tremendous impression for your church.

- **Planning and preparation.** Things will definitely go wrong but this is another key area that tends to get overlooked. I have talked with planters who have a great vision, a contagious personality, and awesome ideas but they weren't successful because they didn't plan and prepare. I know this might be better addressed in a leadership book or church plant training but I just want to say it quickly - plan and prepare! The more you prepare the fewer mistakes you will make and the better your church plant can be. Don't wait until the last minute to do your marketing materials or web site and then throw it out there and hope it sticks. Don't wait to address an issue in the children's ministry until it happens. Don't test your media presentation two minutes before worship. Show your team how to welcome visitors in advance, not during the service. Think about and plan for incoming SCUD missiles because they will come! You can't control everything, but control what you can and life will be much smoother!
  
- **Be patient and be persistent.** You can't build a great and lasting church or brand overnight. Building a church and brand is like cooking with a crock-pot, it requires the right ingredients, heat, and time! Hopefully you are not in a hurry because it won't happen quickly. Besides, any vision that is huge - such as church planting - takes time, love, perseverance, and commitment. It will be the same for your church branding efforts.

Having a great brand image is very, very important these days because people look at the outside before they look at the inside. In our culture, the packaging can make the difference between a person buying in or walking away. We all, at times, base the book on its cover (maybe you even decided to read this book because of its cover) and while this may not be the right approach, it is a fact of life and an aspect in church planting we have to deal with. We have to think of branding our churches. We don't have to be 'of the world' but we can use the tools that we have in this world. Paul stated "To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews." 1 Corinthians 9:20a. If Paul became all things to all people so that by all possible means he might save some, isn't it wise that we should do the same? Yet, on the other hand (the famous disclaimer), as important as outside image can be, we must remind ourselves that God is in control and that success or failure will not be determined by whether we have a famous brand or not. Success and failure will be determined by many factors; **the most important factor is being obedient to God's calling for you and your church and listening to the Holy Spirit's leading.** We have to be careful not to place the world's expectations and limitations on building God's kingdom. The way that church planters do things should be different. Yes, we can and should use the tools and resources that we have in this world but we should never believe that the efforts of man will bring God success. Only He can do that! So while I say there is a high importance on branding and that it will affect the way that people will perceive you, you can't place your trust in that alone. You must trust in Him. Go ahead, be the best that you can be with the things that you can control but allow God to work in your church planting mission!

## Chapter 3: TELL YOUR STORY

There are many outstanding books written about story-telling and effective communication. I am not going to dive into the nuts and bolts of the subject, but I will say that a great and inspiring story will capture the hearts and minds of people. An awesome story can make a tremendous impact. Look at the Bible - it's the greatest story ever told! God radically changed and continues to change the lives of others through His Word. While nothing can top or ever come close to the Word of God, we can use excellent communication skills and story telling to our benefit.

If your story or brand is memorable, different, and exciting it can generate results like nothing else! If you can accomplish the goal of telling others about your vision with insane, contagious passion and absolute, focused clarity - then your story can also capture the hearts and minds of the people. If it achieves optimal connection with the listener then your story will be retold and shared with others. If not, you will be forgotten. It's that simple!

If you are a Christian you already have the One Story worth telling. You already have something that just HAS to be shared. You have an edge. If you are planting a church you will be building on that foundation. You will be taking the Cornerstone and constructing something that is for God's glory. You will be adding your vision, direction, leaders, victories, defeats, challenges, and screwed up people into the mix and pouring life into something that God wants to see built. It's going to be awesome. You will have something to talk about - you *have* a story! Telling that story is an integral part of branding and marketing. People want to know about your church, how it started, why it started, how you will be different, and who you will reach. It is your part, as a vision-caster, to communicate that awe-inspiring vision to them with raw, genuine emotion and precision - whether it is through you verbally, or through your logo, web site, and brochure - or even through your team, worship, and small groups. You will have to communicate the vision often and know how to communicate it between 30 seconds and three minutes. Be prepared because you never know when the opportunity to share will present itself. I will also say that you have to do everything you can to grab their attention and make a connection with people for them to hear it, listen to it, and remember it. It's extremely tough to be remembered in today's society where we are bombarded with an onslaught of media frenzy so **you must engage and connect very quickly with your audience.**

There are endless ways to accomplish this, but again, I am not going to write a "how-to" chapter on the best way to tell *your* story. This is something you will have to determine that best

fits what you and your church are about, as well as the community or culture you are surrounded by. Different methods have different outcomes for different people. There are many resources available to help you make decisions and get ideas but I want to encourage you to develop your own style, creative spin, and ideas first then find a delivery method or system. Your hard work will be worth the investment.

I am going to throw out three short tips that are the most underemphasized elements in sharing visions or marketing church plants that are important to make a note of.

- **Be Creative.** Do you want the people you are trying to reach to be inspired? Then be original and creative! PLEASE, don't copy what other church planters or churches are doing. There are a lot of planters who have gotten into the habit of copying other thriving churches -- their exact image, style, wording, etc., and this is just plain laziness and stupid. It is fine to glean and improvise ideas from churches, ministries, and even businesses, but you should never try to copy or duplicate what someone else has done. Why? Well, first, there might be copyright issues and it is unethical unless you get permission, and while you may have a very similar vision or idea, it's just not you until you pour *your* soul, *your* ideas, and *your* heart into it. **If you own it you will communicate it more effectively.** If you do find something like a Statement of Faith that would just be re-inventing the wheel for you, contact the church and get permission to use it. Here's a quick example: Go out and look at new church planters web sites. How many of them say "we are a postmodern, relevant, authentic, emergent church that explores the mysteries of God." I'm sorry if that's on your web site, I'm really not picking on you; it's just that it seems many planters have the "Me-Too Syndrome." I can't tell you how many sites I have found where the text was copied and pasted from another site. Come on, sack up and do your own thing. Be different.
- **Be Simple.** I have only been attending church since 1997. I didn't grow up in the church and every time I look at any church's materials I try to see it from the perspective of an unbeliever. It's amazing how many churches talk in a language that's all their own. Even though I study and read voraciously (a very big word for me) I still don't have a clue what some pastors or church people are talking about when they open their mouths or produce their literature. There is emergence, holistic appreciation, postmodernism, sanctification, edification, justification, constipation, blah, blah, blah! Ordinary people just don't relate and understand what some of us are trying to say. We might sound intelligent but when people can't comprehend they just tune out. Not to mention it makes some people feel small by using big words and this is not edifying, eh? I recommend that it should be able to

be understood by a seven year old child. If you can accomplish that, it will work. Besides, Jesus talked in such a way that the people He was trying to reach understood, He didn't speak in religious gobbley-gook. Keep it simple and meaningful.

- **Be short.** In addition to keeping your verbiage in an understandable language, it is important to keep your message short. I am not necessarily talking about preaching (though some people are very long-winded and ramble on to the point where a vasectomy sounds more appealing) but people have a short attention span and trying to say too much will only defeat your purpose of reaching them. Society is on information overload!!! Whether you are communicating your information on your web site or promotional materials or vision casting to people - say it clearly, concisely, and quickly. If you visit a web site, are you more likely to read through a long list of information that is just blah, blah, blah, or would you rather get to the point and then on with your life? Most people would choose the latter. Remember Joe Friday's line, "just the facts ma'am." It's a lesson to remember.

One other thing you can do is make a personal observation on how a communicator, a web site, or a brochure piques your interest or turns you off. It will help you learn a lot and will increase your effectiveness in sharing your story to the world. Story-telling is an art and being able to communicate effectively takes patience and practice. Do your best to excel in them. The way that you say what you say will make the difference between a person listening and a person tuning out.



## Chapter 4: DEVELOPING YOUR IDENTITY

I mentioned in Chapter 2, that if you have contact with live people they are going to brand you, define you, and label you. They may not be like Burger King and do it your way but you can do your best to lead them and help them see it your way. I also mentioned that people look at the outside first and will judge a book by its cover. We also discussed that a brand is not just a logo or identity; it is an experience to be lived by the consumer. While the last sentence holds true, most people will think that your brand has to do with your identity. It is also likely that it will be the first piece of the puzzle that people will experience with your church. The probability that people will receive a connect card, see an ad, or visit your web site *before* personal contact is very high. You have to make the most of this opportunity!

Starting off with the right brand identity will have an extremely positive or negative impact on your audience and your team. Will they connect or disconnect with your church? How will they perceive or feel about your church when they see your print or web media? Can you and will you paint an accurate picture for them? There are a lot of things to search through and consider but your church *is* going to have an identity. You will have to market your church. You will have to do some type of print or web media. It is also beneficial and essential for you to begin with the end in mind.

The process of developing a new identity for your church can be very invigorating and exciting. It is a time when you can be creative; you can let the ideas really fly. A planter can fill up the notepad, think outside the box, and jot down those crazy ideas! But developing a strong and memorable identity can also be tough. It's not as easy as it seems. It can cause analysis paralysis because it is sometimes difficult to make a decision. I have known planters who started off with great enthusiasm and direction but then had so many choices or opinions given to them that it made them curl up in the fetal position afraid to move (OK, I am exaggerating...they never started off with any enthusiasm). How *do* you choose a name, the colors, make a choice between semi-custom and custom design, and so on? While there is A LOT to consider and think about, I am going to equip you with a crash course in Identity Development 101. Here are the cliff notes:

### SEMI CUSTOM DESIGN VERSUS CUSTOM DESIGN

For a long time the only way to get design work or identity development created was having it custom designed by a graphic designer or advertising agency. With the technology movement though, designing became more streamlined and computers allowed for more versatility in the graphic arts. Today there are companies that still only do custom work, but there are also

options to have semi-custom or template designs made ready for you. How do you decide which option to go with? Which will best meet your needs? There are three main things to consider in choosing semi-custom or custom: price, time, and originality. Let's look at each one closely.

- **Price:** There are many people who think of marketing as an expense, but it's really an investment. Either way you go (semi-custom or custom) you are investing in your church and reaching others. The question to ask is how much money do you want to invest in your identity? I know, that's a dumb question because most planters will say zero, but unless you get it all for free (read Chapter 1) planters will have to decide how important it is to spend money to have this done. I can tell you until I am blue in the face how important I think it is, but you have to do what you feel is right. Semi-custom work is more cost-effective to run with because you are starting with a base design or pre-designed template. The concept has already been created, which saves time but it is not developed specifically for you (see originality section). Custom design is more expensive because there is more involved in the creative and design process. As for price comparison, you can expect to pay anywhere from \$100 to \$750 on average for a semi-custom logo or identity, and \$750 to \$2500 for a custom logo or identity package.

A special note on pricing: There are many companies and designers in the marketplace that offer custom logos and identity for \$500 or less. While this seems like a great deal, you will usually get what you pay for. I have talked with many church planters and businesses that have used these companies (like [mycheapcrappylogo.com](http://mycheapcrappylogo.com), [customlogoin15seconds.com](http://customlogoin15seconds.com), or [orderalogowithfries.com](http://orderalogowithfries.com)) and they have come away frustrated and disappointed. All of them ended up going with a new company and starting all over again. **Don't choose a company or designer based on pricing.** Research the company - look at their portfolio, see if they specialize in identity development, ask for referrals, etc.

One more thing to consider: Can the company you choose provide the digital art files for all of your needs? It is important to have several different files of your logo or design work and for them to be set up right for the application in which it will be used. There are designers who might create a great looking logo but can't set up the digital files to work with print, web, or other forms of media. If this is the case you can end up with a lot of frustration and you will be shelling out more money to have it done right. Your design needs to work across all platforms and it pays to invest more in a solid designer who can achieve this.

- **Time:** Church planters have a lot on their plates most of the time. They just have so many things to do and not enough time. Sometimes planters are notorious for waiting until the last minute to get their project started which can make a huge difference in the decision of choosing semi-custom or custom. While this is understandable in some circumstances, please realize that a lack of planning doesn't necessitate an emergency on a designer's behalf, and if you want custom it helps to get ahead in the game.

Time is an important factor in the design process. Some companies can promise your identity package in 24 hours, but fast food design is unhealthy. Garbage in is garbage out! Great design work, especially custom, takes time to do. In general, semi-custom can be implemented more quickly because it starts with a basic design or template. Custom work takes longer to do because of the process. You can expect semi-custom artwork, depending on if it's a logo, postcard, or web site, to take anywhere from three days to three weeks to finish. Custom artwork can take anywhere from four to eight weeks depending on the project. The time involved can be based on many factors including the designers work load, client interaction and feedback, or an act of God. I will say that there are times when a designer has to wait on the client to move forward so if you do a great job communicating, do your homework in advance, and respond quickly with comments and feedback, the easier and faster your project can be completed.

- **Originality:** How important is it to you to have a look that is all your own, to be unique and to be original? This will help with the decision to choose between semi-custom or custom work. When you go with semi-custom options, you can get some good stuff but you may run the risk of running into another church that has the same look and feel. There are a few template based companies that lock in a design to a specific zip code, which is helpful. Semi-custom designs are cheaper and quicker but they also have limitations. Some companies will only allow you to plug in your name with minimal choices and some companies will allow for a little more customization. They are usually a good option for money strapped planters.

Custom artwork and identity on the other hand is designed specifically for your church. It is original and tailored to who you are. Great designers that specialize in custom branding and identity will take the time to get to know who you are, what you are about, what your vision is, your target group, etc., to ensure that your branding communicates all of those values effectively and strategically. You can develop a brand identity that will be strong

today and in the future. The process is much more detailed but the end results can be immeasurable.

So what would I recommend? This is a hard question because every church planter has different circumstances and needs. Some have the resources, others do not. I do preach from my soap box that people should be as original or different as they can; whether it is for church planting, business, marketing, branding, or even personality. If we all look and act the same way, life will be pretty boring and we definitely won't stand out. God made us all different and I think we should embrace that and make it known. Yet I know that there are planters who want to be original but can't afford the price for custom design and identity. My advice would be this - invest in a custom identity package above everything else first. Spend the money to do it right the first time if possible. The reason is that your brand identity is the foundation and for other items such as websites, brochures, etc., you can easily build semi-custom designs off of that foundation. You can implement your identity into a base design that matches what you want to communicate and tie that in with your identity. If you can afford to go all out with a custom package, more power to you! Ultimately, you will have to choose what is best for you. The investment in a custom identity is definitely worth it, but in the beginning stages of a church plant it may not be an option. If not, start small and go semi-custom. Many million-dollar companies have re-purposed or re-imaged their image over the years when they have had the funding or needed a change - you can too. Either way, just do your best to make sure that it closely matches who you are and that the design looks professional and marketable.

## **LOGOS:**

Logos are an important part of the identity package. They are an extension piece of your brand and an effective logo is mandatory for connecting with your team and community. For example, if you are a very hip and young church but you have a logo design that communicates you're traditional and boring; you have failed to identify and connect with your focus group. Logos are usually one of the very first visual images that a consumer will have of your church so it pays to have it created right.

There are many different types of logos. There are icon logos which use some sort of graphic like Apple, Nike, Starbucks, and John Deere. Icon logos tie in an image to help people remember who you are. They use a symbol or identifier like cattle brands. One look at the brand and you know which ranch the cattle belong to. There are also typeface logos like Xerox, IBM, Goldman's, or Walt Disney. These logos use specific fonts or hand drawn lettering to achieve their logo designs. At times, a logo will combine both of these aspects. The choice for your logo will be

a matter of preference. If you have a unique name and it is different than anything else or it is more descriptive, then a typeface logo would work best. You won't necessarily need an icon to tie in with it. If you have a name that isn't as creative or that is more conservative, an icon/symbol logo would be a great way to go. Whichever you decide to choose there are some basic rules to keep in mind for having an effective and memorable logo.

- A logo should look great in black and white, or grayscale. If it only looks great in color you will be disappointed because there will be many applications that you will have to print in grayscale or limited colors. For example, newspaper advertising or screen-printing - it's not always possible to reproduce a logo in full color so make sure you can convert it to simple colors or black and white.
- A logo should evoke a positive response and avoid negative implications. Some symbols, names, or images grab people and give them a lift. There are also names, taglines, images or icons that can be turn offs or offensive in some cultures. Of course when it comes to the Cross and Jesus...I am ALL about offending people so don't hold back here!
- A logo should communicate *your* style and brand - not someone else's.
- A logo should be designed to last at least 25 years. This is difficult to achieve with semi-custom logos because of what they are and because of the rapidly changing culture. Try to avoid choosing your identity based on current fads or trends. They will soon become outdated.
- A logo should be able to be read or understood at a minimum of one to two inches wide. If it can only be read or understood at a larger size you will be very disappointed when it is sized for smaller envelopes, pens, or promotional items that do not have the space for a larger logo. If you never plan to do this it's not as big of a deal, but I still recommend having a logo that looks equally appealing at two inches wide as it is at two feet wide.
- A logo should be simple. I have seen some very creative and intricate designs or logos with all kinds of far out special effects. There isn't anything wrong with that but if there is too much to the design it can take away the impact of a logo, make it difficult to reproduce at a smaller size or for applications such as embroidery, and it can result in higher printing costs because of technical issues. Try to keep logos simple and clean for best results.

- A logo should be designed to work with all forms of media. There are a lot of fabulous designers out in the world who can create eye-catching, head turning, out of this world logos and designs. The problem is that in many applications it just won't reproduce well. What works for screen printing on t-shirts, doesn't always work for embroidered shirts. What works for the Internet might not be able to be produced for banners. These skills can only come through experience and training. Many designers cannot understand how to translate the design across the platforms available and one who does is worth their weight in gold!
  
- If at all possible, have your designer create your logo in a vector format or line-art. Design files come in two formats, vector and bitmap. A vector file (usually created in Adobe Illustrator, Freehand, or Corel Draw) is like a line art drawing. When the design is resized or changed, it maintains the integrity and clean look of the design. Plus, a designer can manipulate the design if needed. A bitmap file (usually created in Photoshop, MS Paint, Photo Paint) is made up of colored squares called pixels. The design may look exceptional on your screen or even printed at one size, but if you enlarge the graphic it becomes jagged and awful looking. Vector files such as EPS, AI, and CDR are also the best to use for every application including print media, banners, screen printing, and even the Internet because they can be easily converted for the specific use.

All in all, the world is being scattered with millions of logos, icons, and images everyday. The uses of a logo are still very important but keep in mind the logo is not the sole determining factor for a person to choose, visit, and stay at your church. Once again, do the best you can do but remember that all does not ride on a logo or identity alone.

### **NAMING YOUR CHURCH:**

Ed Stetzer states in, [Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age](#), that “choosing a name is a significant action when beginning a new life or a new congregation.” I totally agree. Choosing a name requires a lot of thought, prayer, and insight but it should not require months to do so. Your church name should reflect who you are, your values, and your style of church. It should be able to be pronounced easily and be able to be understood, but even if you have a more difficult name, like Capax Dei, that's not a problem, you will probably just spend a lot of time educating people about it. You will also have to research and find out if your name has any negative connotations in your culture. If it does, it can tear you down before you have a chance to build.

There has also been much debate over whether a church should have their denomination affiliation (if any) in their name or if they should include the words such as church, community, or fellowship in the name. My take is who cares? It's like discussing which is better...a 1968 or a 1969 Camaro. It's all a point of perspective or preference and we can argue until the day we die - and it doesn't matter. No matter what you do someone is going to criticize your decision. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a stumbling block to many people, and your church will also be a stumbling block. The sooner you realize that, the quicker you can decide and move on.

In general, I have been paralyzed by the 'naming' fear many times in business and ministry. My wife thinks I am a nut because I will stress weeks over choosing the right name. In some situations, it really is worth the time, effort, and research because your name is important. It has to be memorable and effective. It should be better than ABC Church which sounds very boring. Avoid long names like Our Lady of Perpetual Motion Holiness Church (though I have been toying with this name). Another thing Ed Stetzer states in his book is to be careful about naming your church after a specific street because the street could change and I agree. Make sure the name you pick can't become obsolete because of something out of your control - such as a name change of the street. But all in all, don't be so consumed with whether you call your church Lifeway Baptist Church or Lifeway Fellowship Church - all it will do is cause stress and keep you from spending your time on other important things. At the end of the day go with your gut instinct and move forward. Regardless of what you call your church, people will be drawn to Him by Him and as long as your church name honors God, and you do your best to minister to them, that's what matters.

#### **FOCUS GROUPS AND OPINIONS:**

I touched on this briefly above and I will say it again, go with your gut instinct first (or listen to your spouse; she is always right). If you ask twelve people their thoughts on your new identity, your web site, or your style of worship, you will probably get twelve different opinions. Using a focus group may build ownership and teamwork but in the end you will need to make the choice. Plus, feedback can kill momentum and cause a leader to skimp on making a decision. It is better to make a decision and deal with the victory or defeat than to not make a decision at all. Don't waste useless energy and valuable time in the process. Follow your heart and your mind.

#### **COLORS:**

Choosing colors for a brand identity can be easy or it can be complicated. I will try to make it easier for you. There are a few items to keep in mind, but overall, it is again a matter of

taste. One rule of thumb used to be that unless you wanted to spend a lot of money on print media, you need to keep colors to a minimum. With the invention of digital technology and new printers available, using full color is not a cost-prohibitive option any more. It can be beneficial (and a good choice) to keep colors to a minimum for simplicity and impact, but the sky is the limit. Here are some insights:

- Choose complimentary colors (saying this will date me but...color wheels are great if the only way you can match colors is with the Garanimal symbols). Green and red are great for Christmas, not so good for identities. Also avoid trendy colors and colors like baby poop green and anything with bad connotations or you will probably end up outdated or ridiculed.
- If you have a color that you just *have* to match, like Harley Davidson orange, you will have to have a custom ink made which is more expensive. You will also have to play quality control because sometimes the colors will be wrong. In addition, it's sometimes difficult to get the colors perfect if your design is in full-color as compared to two colors. If you are thinking a specific color, go with one to three colors max. If blue is blue to you, don't worry about it.
- Color blends and gradients can be difficult to match and get right when printing, though new technology is changing this. Plus, color blends will never look like a printed brochure when doing embroidery or screen-printing. If the desired outcome is not that important to you then it's not a big deal. If you have to have it exactly a certain way, do your homework with the printing companies to see if they can accomplish the task, or skip the gradients all together.
- PLEASE don't use a light color on a light color (or dark on dark). I have seen many web sites where a person has put yellow text on a white background. This is just crazy! Make sure that the colors contrast enough so that words or images are clear, distinct, and readable. It's just common sense.

Once again, technology continues to change at a very rapid pace and with it some of the methods of printing brochures, promotional items, and t-shirts will also change. It is always a good practice to do your homework or consult with a professional designer or printer to discuss color choices and production issues before producing your materials.

## **LAST THOUGHTS ON IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT:**

We have covered a lot of ground in this chapter and there is still much more that can be addressed but these basics that I have included will give you a great start when thinking about your church's brand identity and design. I recommend that you pick up some books on branding and design if you want to get more details. I will also include a questionnaire in the back of this manual that will help you work through the brand identity and development process. I encourage you to hire a professional designer if at all possible for this type of work. The investment is well worth it.



## Chapter 5: BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME!

Build it and they will come. This was a line from the movie Field of Dreams. It was also a myth that many people in the dot-com bust believed about web sites. “If we just build a web site and put it up, people will come and we will be rich,” they thought. Most of us know how that turned out... with a lot of broke and disappointed people! Some of these unfortunate souls spent their retirement, kid’s college fund, or complete savings to finance a grand money making venture thinking that if they “just built it, they would come.” Instead their dreams were shattered. There was a lot of carnage in the dot-com bust...and it is still happening today!

Church planters aren’t exempt from this scenario either. Many church planters have also invested in web sites only to discover that their sites have failed as well. Maybe a church isn’t trying to increase profits or revenue, but they still have to interest their target audience in their “product.” New research shows that most people will check out a church web site before they visit and will even determine *if* they visit based on the web site. Studies also show that you have three seconds to grab a viewer’s attention and hold them. Yes, that’s 3 seconds...it’s not a typo. Your site better be good.

A web site can and will speak volumes (some entirely too much) about your church. The design and layout, content, graphics, functionality, usability, and features will all determine how people will view your site, whether or not they will stay, and whether or not they will ever come back. Do you have a church web site? How does it stack up? Is it engaging and informative or a vomitous mass of hyperbole? There are many reasons why a person will be turned on or off by a web site which we will explore in this chapter. It is also important to note that just because you have a web site that doesn’t mean people will automatically find it and come to it - you have to do more than just build it. I will also include thoughts on new technology and things to consider before you go all out with the latest and greatest. We’ll start off with some reasons why web sites don’t work.

### WHY WEB SITES DON’T WORK

- **Bad Design and Layout.** Many web sites on the Information Superhighway look like scattered debris from an Oklahoma twister or to just put it plainly...their design stinks. Have you ever gone to a web site and been so overwhelmed by the hodge-podge of information and graphics on a homepage that it just makes your head spin? The result is usually a rapid exit. Ineffective design and layout for *any* web site kills usage, retention, and any hopes of connecting with the consumer. Unfortunately 90% of the web sites on the

Internet fall into this category. The days of letting Johnnie's second cousin's little brother who knows Web Master Pro 3000 need to be a thing of the past unless you want to turn people off. It is important to hire or use a person who designs web sites professionally for a living.

Excellent layout for a web site will incorporate few pictures, short and streamlined text, and complimentary colors - a great web site doesn't have to be super-hyped up with flashing banners on steroids and a 50 page photo album on the homepage, just keep it simple.

Pick a design that is easy to read left to right, the way that people normally read. Use bold and leading headlines to draw readers into text if you have several sections of content. Don't overwhelm a viewer with so many options that they can't make a decision on where to go first. As I said earlier, don't put yellow text on a white background...you know what I mean? Again, I will state that less is always better.

- **Dysfunction.** I have visited hundreds of web sites that provide no function other than pure frustration to the visitor. Some examples of being dysfunctional are broken or non-working links, suffering through hundreds of pages to find any contact information, pictures that are a thousand gigabytes, gratuitous and excessive use of Flash files, dancing pigs and ducks that you can't get rid of, and 17<sup>th</sup> generation MIDI files of "Where Art Thou" that you can't turn off. Let me ask - what is the purpose of your web site? It should be to draw people in and provide them with the essential information or tools they need and are looking for; it should not give them an online carnival show or elevated blood pressure.

When developing your web site keep your viewers interest in mind when making decisions. Avoid using flash intros that are lengthy or that do not have a skip button, no I take that back...don't use flash intros! Those are history - or should be! Make sure that your links work and connect to the right place. Don't overwhelm a person with features. Give them the ability to turn off stuff like music files. Keep pictures to a manageable download time and try to ensure your site works on a majority of web browsers and computers. The easier you can make your site to navigate and the more user-friendly it is, the better off you and your audience will be.

- **Useless hyperbole and diatribe.** So many people try to say so many things in a day and age when nobody has the time to stop and listen. Web sites that fill up space with needless verbiage and useless hyperbole are just wasting time...theirs and ours. Include information that benefits your audience. Give them the stuff they are searching for,

nothing more and nothing less. Provide them with the content that will help them choose your church, visit, and return for more. Don't bog people down with long content when you can keep it short and sweet. I recommend that you hire a proofreader or copy writer to help you if you struggle in this area. Ask yourself who will read it and what is truly necessary. This advice also applies to ALL of your marketing materials - no fluff just the important stuff!

- **Not Planning.** Many web sites are unsuccessful due to a lack of planning. This goes back to the question in the functionality section - what is the purpose or function of your web site? Is it to provide your audience with a wonderful experience, to generate in-church visits, build your church brand, or to show pictures of your Chinese Pug? You must have a road map and plan of where you want to go before you can get there. How will you determine if your on-line venture is a success? What are the goals you want to achieve? Do you have all of your ducks in a row (like content) to start? Try and lay out all the possibilities - what your viewers needs are, what your budget is now or will be down the road, who will manage the site, will you really need a blog and message board to start, and anything else that comes to mind. You will also save time and money by deciding what you want on your site from the very beginning. Thinking out the process takes time but it will prepare you and keep you from making unnecessary mistakes in the future.
  
- **Lack of Promoting.** You will never, ever get people to visit your web site if you do not market or promote it! Some churches think that marketing is a dirty word and if you do you are wrong - you have to market your church. In order for people to find your web site they must know where to look. Print media, radio, business cards, TV, publications, search engines, word of mouth, etc., are all items needed for a potential visitor to find and visit your site. Slap your web site name on everything and anything you can, but before you get the word out make sure you have a good site.

If you will take the time to read and learn from these common mistakes, I guarantee that you will be much happier with your web site venture and your visitors will be too. And don't we all want to be happy?

The rest of this chapter I want to take the opportunity to offer a few more thoughts and ideas as well as common problems I have noticed from working with church planters on their web site needs over the last few years. I won't put them in any specific order and just list them as they come to mind. I hope that you find this information beneficial for your church plant.

## **TECHNOLOGY:**

There are a lot of very cool things that are available for use with web sites and the Internet. Technology changes so rapidly and it can truly make your head spin. As I write this, there is Pod-Casting, Message Boards, Blogging, RSS Feeds, and other kinds of features that make you go hmmm. It is a very enticing proposition for church planters to want to be on the cutting edge of technology and to be a kick-butt, media-driven church. There is nothing wrong with that in and of itself. We should do our best to stay up to date with the culture and use those tools for His glory. But it is easy to lose focus on Christ and what really matters and be overly consumed with technology.

There have been many planters that I have worked with that were so bent on having a super-hyped media arsenal that I never really heard much about Jesus, prayer, mission, or any other essentials of Christian faith. They just HAD to have this new thingamajig or that new doodad that was going to change the way they did church or be the magic bullet for making them a hip church. What is sad is that I have had conversations with some of these guys down the road and what they found out was that they bought into these gadgets and then couldn't figure out how to use them or didn't have the time to keep up with them. It ended up being a waste of time, money, and resources for them and their church. So I urge you to really consider if you really need that piece of technology or if you just really want it. I am not trying to shoot anyone down or say that blogs, message boards, or podcasting is wrong or unnecessary. I am just saying to think it through. Don't waste money on something that seems cool today but in three months when the novelty wears off its history. Don't get message boards if you only have ten people in your church. Wait until you grow. Hold off on blogging if you don't have the time to invest in doing it. It does require time and if your blog grows old and stale people will lose interest. Take things into consideration and start off with the basics. You can always add the latest and greatest down the road...and if these "cool features" end up losing steam, you have lost nothing.

## **PREPARATION:**

I already hit on the importance of planning earlier in the chapter but will say it again, thinking out the process takes time but it will prepare you and keep you from making unnecessary mistakes in the future. One of the common mistakes I have observed is that a planter will be hot n' heavy about launching their web site but will have forgotten to think through what content or information they need on their site. This will not only hold up the design and development of your site but could result in costly changes down the road. Plan out what information will be the priority of your web site and what will be the secondary. Consider what types of photos you would

like to use. Will they be stock photos or done in house? Will you have abstract photos or pictures of perfectly groomed people? Are you going to incorporate video or audio? Will you have enough band-width with your hosting plan to do so? Ask as many questions as you can. Think through every detail possible. The more work you can do on the front end the more money, hassles, and regret it will save you on the back end of the project.

#### **TEMPLATES VS. CUSTOM DESIGN:**

In Chapter 4, I discussed the differences between semi-custom and custom design. The same concepts apply to web sites as well. There are now many companies that provide web site and design services to church planters. Some of them offer semi-custom or template sites only, others only do custom work, and a few do both. What I have noticed is that most template designs available, specifically for churches or ministries, are usually outdated, not relevant, or just stink. On the flip side I have seen a few professional and custom web design companies who are just as bad. This can be a Catch-22 because I already stated that the days of letting Johnnie's second cousin's little brother who knows Web Master Pro 3000 should be a thing of the past, but yet there are professionals that aren't much better. But don't fret because there are a few really great companies that specialize in template designs, custom designs, and both [see list of resources in back].

There are pros and cons to both template sites and custom web sites. Templates or base designs are cheap, effective, quick to implement, and you have an idea of what you are going to get before you start. The down side is that they won't be designed just for your church and there will be others out there with the same design. If you choose to go with a custom web site you will get a design that is created specifically for your church and that can tie in with your brand image and marketing, it will also include the features that you need or want. The hard fact facing planters though is that custom is a bigger investment. There are web designers who will do custom sites for practically nothing, but be careful because in most cases you get what you pay for.

My view is that custom sites are great but if you look at the overall shelf life of a design, the investment may not be worth it. If the design is trendy it will soon be outdated and this is a big deterrence to visitors. Additionally, a web site needs to be fresh and updated on a continual basis. There are so many sites that stay the same for years and have outdated content or photos. If you spend three to six grand on a custom site and update it every year...that is a significant investment. I am not saying this is a bad investment but you as a church planter will have to take that into consideration. There are some other options though. You could find a really kick butt

semi-custom design or template and “customize” it to fit your needs. There are a few companies that do that for you or you can purchase the file and have a designer do it for you.

Another option is to have a designer create a custom layout and then have a company that specializes in template-based software code your site with their software. This will give you the ability to change parts of the web site continually and keep it updated. Some planters I know also have people in their group who have the ability to implement the designs into HTML or do the coding to make the web site work. Usually they aren’t creative or artistic but if you have someone who will sell you the design layout then you could have your team member launch the site. This would be an optimal solution for your church because you would get a great design, invest less money up-front, and have the ability to have your guy or gal make continual changes. Ultimately, the decision is up to you and you will have to base it off of your needs and particular circumstances, either way you will need a web site and you will need it to be great or you will run the risk of losing potential church members.

## CHAPTER 6: PRINTED AND PROMOTIONAL MEDIA

Printed and promotional media will always be a necessity for any church, business, or organization. There has been much written over the last several years about the world going paperless and that the invention of multi-media and web sites will make things such as brochures, postcards, and newspaper advertising obsolete. While I believe (and research proves) that many people will not engage with traditional advertising like they did 10 to 30 years ago, I will say that I think the myth of printed materials being a thing of the past is totally wrong. It is essential that a church planter use all the tools that are beneficial to the people they are trying to reach and this includes printed pieces that have become a staple to any marketing campaign.

I have had the opportunity to visit with many church planters over the last couple of years and discuss the effectiveness, needs, or options available when it comes to printed or promotional media. Not only has the way that we approach our culture with media changed but the technology to actually print and produce these materials has opened many opportunities to do work that is absolutely colorful, vibrant, and eye-catching while being extremely cost-effective. Since throwing money away is definitely not the best use of funds, you can now invest in different methods or materials to see what might work and not break the bank to do it.

I have also discovered that even though research is very detailed and usually correct when addressing what is and what isn't effective to use for marketing, you can't justify your decision based on that alone. For example, a church planter I know in the Northwest has had great results from using a full-color postcard to draw people into the church while another planter in the Northeast has virtually no interest from postcard mailers. Even within the same state the case might vary. I was a youth pastor in a small, rural town several years ago and created the coolest web site and full-color marketing that would give Starbucks a run for their money. I was sure that I would draw in kids by the dozens because I designed stuff to appeal to their taste and culture. The problem was they didn't care about web sites or slick marketing. They wanted a phone call or a regular, cheesy letter in the mail with the information or events. Here were 14 to 17 year olds who didn't give a rip about web or print media. Needless to say that freed up my time for other things. My point is that sometimes you just don't know. I have seen planters who had success with a specific item in their community while another failed using the same thing. So while most research shows that direct mailers generate less than a 1% response rate, it is really beneficial to try different marketing and promotional tools to find out which will work for you and your church.

There are also many variables to contemplate in what makes a campaign successful or a failure. I am going to provide a few thoughts on what will help any planter with their printed or

promotional media regardless of their background, denomination, or geographical location. I will also provide you with options that can save you a fistful of cash.

### **PRINTED MEDIA ITEMS:**

Brochures, direct mail postcards, direct mailers, invite cards, t-shirts, newspaper advertising, and billboards are all forms of printed media. Every one of these items can be a part of any marketing arsenal and they can work if designed correctly. Here are some general rules to follow:

- **Copy or Text.** This will be one of the most neglected and abused part of any marketing or advertising campaign. What you say and how you say it will greatly increase or decrease whether a person will read what you want to communicate. It is important that you spend time on your copy and really think out the best and easiest way to convey your message with clarity, focus, and simplicity. If you aren't gifted in writing copy then I highly recommend that you hire a professional copy writer. These professionals will get the meat of what you want to say and season it in a way that will be flavorful and edible. You want to be able to draw in the viewer, engage them, and then help them make the decision - whether that is to call, visit, purchase, etc. Keep your verbiage short and to the point. Avoid useless hyperbole or diatribe. Write with the person you want to reach in mind and don't overdo it. Remember that you only have three to seven seconds to get your message across. Make your wording count!

One way to maximize your copy is to use bold words for any headline text. Make the font larger and stand out but don't get too artsy with the font or people might not be able to read it. Develop an excellent leading headline that will draw the reader into the story or text. **GRAB THEIR ATTENTION!** Headlines like: "Join us for Men's Bible Study," or "Looking for a new church?" are boring and destined for disaster. How many people are going to get excited or feel drawn in by that? Try something different. Headlines like: **"SMOKERS WELCOME! We'd rather you smoke at church than smoke in Hell",** or **"BYOB (Bring your own balls)...God, golf, and guys this Saturday!"** would definitely turn a few heads or get some attention. Maybe these examples are a little dramatic or to some people may seem tasteless but they do get the point across! Sometimes being bold and blunt is exactly what we need. In any case, come up with headliners or intros that are enticing and not lethargic.

Another point to keep in mind with text is the points I brought up in Chapter 3. Go back and reread those. Text and copy should be short, creative, and simple. Don't try and tell

your audience everything you know - tell them what they need to know and get them to ask for more. Write it so they understand what you are saying and in a way in which they can relate.

- **Fonts.** This one is easy...keep your font selection to two to three fonts in any material you produce. I have seen designers (and I use that term loosely) use five or more fonts on one brochure or business card. This is extremely hideous and unprofessional. And of course, please use the right type of fonts for your message. Don't use a Halloween font or feel for Easter items. Don't choose fonts or typestyles that are hard to read for text areas. Instead use them for bold headlines. Better yet, in most cases, make sure that the fonts can be read by a 10 year old or an 80 year old. This will help you and them.
  
- **Images:** You have probably heard the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." It is absolutely true! The images that you choose for advertising, postcards, web sites, brochures, and everything else will make a huge impact or a huge yawn. Images sell so you must pick your pictures wisely. Most people are visual and even if your text stinks you can still grab their attention with the right eye-candy (pictures of Sports Illustrated calendar girls might generate overwhelming response but should not be considered eye-candy). One thought is to find and use pictures that tie in with the theme of your text even if it may be abstract. For example, you could use a pack of smokes for the "Smoker's Welcome" headline above. It would be even better to use a rough looking, motorcycle dude with a fat stogie hanging from his mouth. You could also implement a photo with people smoking in the church or someone actually on fire or smoldering (though I do recommend that you use Photo-shopped effects and not try to set one of your deacons on fire for the photo shoot - though that could make for an interesting segment on the local news). The goal is to find a picture that relates but is also one that will generate as much interest as possible.

I would also recommend that you make sure any photos you use are high quality and a high resolution. There are many people who will snag a picture from a web site (which will look crisp) and then paste it into their brochure and print it (which will look bad). Not only could you get in trouble for copyright infringement you will also have an ugly brochure. There are many stock photography businesses available to you on the Internet. Some charge by the picture and others will charge by the photo size or have a monthly fee (see the appendix for my recommendations). Please be sure to read the license fees for copyright issues, what you can use the photos for, and other information that will be important to know. Download the highest resolution possible. Most photos on the Internet or on web sites are 72 DPI or dots per inch. Professionally designed and printed materials

will need a photo of 300 DPI for the photo to look the best it can be. If a lower resolution photo is enlarged it will cause pixilation which is just as bad as a case of enlarged hemorrhoids. Sometimes you can print smaller pictures and it will be alright but it's a good idea not to take the chance.

The last thing I will say about images is that you should do everything you can to find and utilize the best, most accurate, and relative photos you can for what you are going to communicate.

- **Bleeds:** If your printed item has bleeds (the image will run off of the paper) then make sure that your image or colors run off the page at least 1/8 of an inch. The reason for this is that the printing company will need to cut your materials to size and if the image stops at the crop or cut line you will end up with an image that doesn't run off the edge - it will look funny or like the paper was cut wrong. Normally any printed materials that have a bleed are more expensive (because of cutting and printing on a larger piece of paper to accommodate the bleed) so check with your printing company first before you design.
- **Folds:** If you plan on having a brochure or promotional item that requires folding, it will also be more expensive and you have to accommodate your design to where the fold may be. Ask your designer or printing company for details but be sure to do your homework first.

#### **FULL COLOR AND DIGITAL PRINTING:**

Technology is incredible! What you can do today wasn't always possible or cost effective twenty years ago. I remember when it cost \$300 - \$600 just to do film for anything that would be full color on a printing press. Now you can get 1000 full-color postcards, business cards, and envelopes for that price alone! The digital age has done away with high-cost, high volume printing and ushered in low volume, low cost printing. This, my friend, is a blessing for any church planter. Full color and glossy brochures, postcards, etc., are definitely a step up and have more impact than a photocopied brochure or a black and white piece. There are many companies on the Internet that offer full service and full color printing for outstanding prices. Many of these companies can also prove a turn-key solution within three to five business days. There is basically no reason not to do color printing unless you are completely broke, but even then most home printers are able to do small runs with picture perfect quality. There is a down side to printing on an ink-jet printer though, and that is that color cartridges can cost as much as the printer and you

can end up spending a couple hundred bucks and hours printing when you can send it to a printing company for the same price (and be able to do something else with your time).

One word of advice - whatever company you might choose, ask for samples of their printing, ask about their return or mess up policies, make sure there are no hidden fees, and check to see if they will be able to use your design file. If you can provide them with the art file ready to go that will save you money on the job. Most printing companies will want the files in Adobe Illustrator, EPS, Photoshop, or PDF. If you hire a designer, make sure they can set up the files correctly or you will be banging your head on the wall later.

### **PLANNING FOR PRINT MEDIA:**

I have said this many times and I'll say it again - plan everything you can in advance. There are many other things that I could go into in this section on printed media that could make your head spin. This is why it is important to work with a professional design company or printing company. Sometimes there are issues that pop up or that need to be addressed which could cause your printing to turn out like a filled baby diaper or that will cause delays in getting your media tools completed on time. Working with a company that actually *knows* what they are doing is going to save you time, money, and stress - and the more you plan, the better it will be for everyone involved.

One of the situations I have observed (not just with planters) is that most people wait until the last minute to order their banners, signs, brochures, or postcard. Please don't take offense but a lack of planning on your behalf doesn't constitute an emergency on someone else's behalf! I have been in the fire and the one lighting the fire and it sucks either way. When a job is rushed, most of the time it will get messed up. My rule of thumb is to plan backwards from the day you will actually need your printed materials in hand. If you need your postcards to be mailed on the 29<sup>th</sup>, realize that you need them back from the printer by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Most printers average 14 days to print so you send them the (ready to go) file by the 8<sup>th</sup>. If you are hiring a design company, they may need a couple of weeks to design and have you proof it, which would mean contacting the designer at least 14 days before the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month. Obviously you can see why advanced planning would help. You would also need to take into consideration your time to write or plan the piece and the time it would take for your target audience to actually receive that item. Whew! That makes me stressed to think about all that!

**Please do everything in your control to plan out your media needs, what it will take to get it finished, and structure your time table accordingly.** If you need help, hire a company that can help you create a promotional or marketing strategy and timeline. You will benefit from it. Remember that things can and will go wrong so don't forget to build in extra ideas, time, or money for the budget.

#### **BANNERS OR SIGNAGE:**

I will say this up front - hire a professional company to design and fabricate your banners or signage. There are so many things to take into consideration that you will go nuts just trying to set up a file for a banner and have it work right. Will your banner be printed with a digital printer or will it be cut vinyl (sticker) applied to the banner? If you provide the file, will it work for the method the banner company will use to produce the banner or sign? Will you be able to read it from 5 feet, 20 feet, or 100 feet? Are there building codes that will keep you from hanging your sign or using electricity for that new \$4000 backlit sign? These are all valid questions that will need to be addressed. If you are doing permanent signage, the sign company should handle ALL the details when it comes to building codes or specifics so you can rest a little easier on this one. Most planters start with banners and it helps to know what you are doing.

Basically there are two types of banners - digitally printed banners, which are printed on a large printer and can use full-color graphics, and vinyl banners where the lettering is cut using a plotter and applied to the banner by hand. It really doesn't matter which style you choose - both work well. It will make a difference if you plan on using the banner outdoors or indoors because some inks or vinyl will fade more quickly with the weather or sunshine. Be sure to specify that with your banner company before placing your order! Pricing for either banner will depend on the size of the banner. Some of the standard sizes are 2' x 6', 2' x 8', 3' x 6', 3' x 8', and 4' x 8' and you can expect to invest \$120 - \$200 on average. The design and layout will determine the size you should choose. If you have a taller logo you may need a taller banner size in order for it to be printed at a readable or recognizable size. Remember that it *is* a banner and that you should keep text to a minimum. A person driving by has to be able to read and understand it in three seconds or less. The message should be clear and the text should stand out. The lettering should be the right weight and size so that it can be read from a distance (three inch letters are difficult to read while driving by at 45 mph). If it is a street banner, I recommend that it should be able to be read at least 50 feet away and the further the better. As for colors, the best proven colors are dark text on a white background. I recommend avoiding full-color digital banners for street type banners because it will just end up being a blur.

All in all it's best to determine where you will place your banners or signs, what they will need to say, and take into account the scenery and readability factor of people driving or walking by. Remember that foliage and shrubs can limit viewing. If it is an outdoor banner make sure it is anchored down correctly because if the wind is blowing strong it will make it difficult to read. One suggestion is building a frame using PVC piping and using mini bungie cords to tie it down. You can make a T-stand for the feet and fill it with sand or concrete for stability...and if you do it yourself it will save you some dough. Remember to ask questions and think things through.

## T-SHIRTS:

At some point in your church life you may want to do t-shirts or other apparel. Before you get that great idea and head down to the local screen printer, I'll give you some insight for screen-printing.

- **Buy your t-shirts, sweatshirts, or caps from a wholesale company and then hire a screen printing company that does contract work.** If you go into a shop and order your products, most of the time a printer will mark them up at least 50% -100%. There's nothing wrong with that because they have to handle them and take the time to do it, but you can save a lot by doing it yourself. For example: You can buy a heavyweight, 100% cotton Anvil or Fruit of the Loom t-shirt in bulk for \$1.00 - \$2.00 each. (This depends on the quantity, sizes, and color). If you have a two-color print on one side of the shirt, it may cost \$2.00 to print. Besides a set-up fee, you will invest \$4-5 per shirt. If you just walk in the shop and tell them what you want, you could spend \$10-\$12 per shirt. If your time is worth more than saving some dough, then let them handle all of it, otherwise you can put a little leg work into it and save yourself some dough.
- **The more colors and locations, the more it costs.** The industry standard is to charge for each color. You will have to determine if having a full-color design or more colors is worth the investment. If you print on a dark shirt, you will have to apply a white ink underbase so that will be one color on top of any others you may have.

[**Tip:** if you have a designer who knows how to create art for screen printing and how to mix colors, you could blend a yellow and green to get blue, without paying for an extra color].

The more print locations you have, the more it will cost too (a left chest design and a back print will be more than just a left chest print). Not only will you be charged for the ink for each location, you will be charged a set-up for each location. Example: two colors on a

back print set-up may be \$20 per color/screen. Then you have a two color design on the left chest which would equal \$80 total for set-up/screen charges.

[**Tip:** if you do a smaller design for a left chest and have another design that isn't too big for the back, have the printer put both designs on one screen to eliminate extra fees. This is called piggybacking but this usually only works if the screens/design will be the same color. Piggybacking can also be done with other job orders. If another job requires a left chest with black ink and yours does too, the printer could put both on one screen and split the cost].

- **Darker shirts and XXL cost more.** White shirts are the cheapest, dark colors are more. Also any size XXL and over will cost more.
- **All shirts are not created equal.** 50/50 shirts for the most part are a waste of money. They may be cheaper but some brands fall apart after being washed many times, they rip easier, or the neck will stretch out so far that Jabba the Hut could wear it. Go with a quality t-shirt, sweatshirt, or cap - otherwise it's just garbage.
- **Ask about discounts or waiving set-up fees.** You don't know until you ask.
- **Use quality artwork.** If you are going to invest your money on a shirt or any other product for that matter, make sure that the design is great and that people will want to wear it. Stay away from cheesy Christian clip-art, sayings, and ugly artwork or you will just throw your money away. I can't tell you how many pastors and youth pastors I have talked to over the years that have ordered shirts or hats and get stuck with 90% of the products mostly because they had a design that my dead dog wouldn't wear. PLEASE use only the best artwork that you can - it will make a lot of people - including yourself very happy! Artwork that is professionally developed for screen-printing and that is in vector/line art will save you a bunch of money because if a print shop has to clean it up or redraw it, it will cost you a bundle.

#### **EMBROIDERY:**

Here are some tips for any apparel that you might embroider.

- **Order your products wholesale.** [see t-shirts above]
- **Ask them to run a sample first.** A great embroiderer will test the design first to see how well it runs. Ask them to run you a sample before going to production.

- **Simplify.** Embroidery is very different from screen printing. The more details and the more colors you have in your design, the more it will cost to produce. Embroidery is usually priced by the stitch count - the more stitches the higher the price. Also, if there is a lot of fine detail in the design it's not going to look great embroidered because there are limits with embroidery.
- **Ask about per piece price instead of a per stitch count.** Maybe you can get a flat fee for each run compared to paying by the stitch count.
- **You will have to pay for digitizing or a 'tape-fee.'** Embroidery machines use different files than what you would use for brochures or screen-printing. You will have to have your design digitized for embroidery. Pay by the project or design - not the stitch count - or you might get taken. Some digitizers that still charge by the stitch count are dishonest. They will up the stitch count or add unnecessary stitches in the design to get more money. Only pay a one time flat fee and make sure that they give you a copy of your digitized design on disk. They might tell you it's their property - that's wrong! If you pay for it, you own it. Make sure to ask BEFORE you hire any company.

#### **PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS:**

Promotional products have been a part of marketing for some time. Go to any church, business, or tradeshow and you will see people with pens, key chains, coffee cups, buttons, flashlights, stickers, and a cornucopia of other items all emblazoned with their logo or name. These items can be very effective for name recognition and branding or they can be a waste of money and you would be better off setting dollar bills on fire. Most of the time people will place an order for promotional products that will be thrown away or lost within 48 hours. If you are interested in purchasing promotional products to help market or spread the word about your church then I recommend investing in items that will be useful to the consumer. For example, porcelain coffee mugs are out of style but the new steel coffee mugs are in. The porcelain might be cheaper but the steel variety will proudly be hailed at soccer games, garage sales, business meetings, and other functions. This is a good investment. Other things such as flash drives (USB memory sticks), MP3 covers, first aid kits, stuff women would keep in their purse, pocket knives, and assorted flashlights with your logo would be well used though they may cost a little more. Pens are cheap and probably the best thing to get if money is the big concern, but get good pens, not the cheap crappy ones. Overall think about what people will use and appreciate before

slapping your identity on it. If they hold on to the product then you have achieved a successful outcome and it is money well spent.

Remember that printed media and promotional items are going to be around for a long time...they are not becoming obsolete. While the effectiveness and success of different types of media will depend on many variables such as your geographic location, culture, community, and demographics, you will need to experiment some and not rely solely on statistical data. Sometimes you never know what will work, but if you make sure that your advertising or marketing materials are well thought out, designed with excellence, and created for the end user you will definitely have the edge and benefit.

## CHAPTER 7: FINAL THOUGHTS

I want to end this manual by revisiting the bad image some people have of marketing and whether it should play a part in God's Church. I believe that people who think that branding or marketing is an evil conspiracy set in action by the communists or Satan should really think about what it truly means to brand or market. I would also encourage that person to read Scripture and find where it says that a church should not promote or market to the world. God has given us different gifts and talents and as long as we glorify Him with these gifts then we should accept that we can use the same tools that the world uses to entice people to benefit His kingdom. The trouble is not that we use marketing tools or place an importance on branding; the trouble is placing these things over the work of the Holy Spirit or allowing them to become more important than God. I know of churches that have such pride in their web sites, their multi-media, their sound systems, their promotional items, their buildings that I wonder if they even care if God is involved in their ministry. It's very sad but true and I used to be one of those as a youth pastor. My emphasis was in providing so much kick-butt, polished, and slick stuff that I forgot that there were more important things to focus on. Yes, the world looks on the outside and I totally believe we should do everything that we can to promote excellence, dedication, and professionalism in our ministries - we need to connect with culture and do it without compromising the Gospel! But we need to remind ourselves that God, with His awesome and unconditional grace, power, and love (to name a few), is the ultimate aspect of drawing people to Himself. Use the tools and resources but allow God to use His as well. Nothing we can do will ever take the place of God's plan.

I hope that you, as a church planter or pastor, will have benefited from reading this manual. I know that the information and ideas poured into this book will save you time, money, and headaches down the road because I had to figure out what works and what doesn't from years of experience doing work for clients. I have been blessed with the opportunity to not only design for clients all over the United States - I have also had the opportunity to learn how to screen-print, embroider, design signs, digitize, and other skills that tie into my profession. It has been an awesome experience! It is my privilege to be able to pass on some of this knowledge to you and be able to serve His workers in the field. I pray that God blesses you in your journey as a church planter and pastor. I pray that you will stay the course, that you will be encouraged, and that you keep your focus on the King of Kings.



## APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED READING AND RESOURCES

### BOOKS ON BRANDING AND MARKETING

- *Married to the Brand...Why Consumers Bond with Some Brands for Life* by William J. McEwen
- *Branding for Non-Profits* by DK Holland
- *Building Strong Brands* by David A. Aaker
- *Emotional Branding: How Successful Brands Gain the Irrational Edge* by Daryl Travis
- *Permission Marketing : Turning Strangers Into Friends And Friends Into Customers* by Seth Godin
- *Kotler on Marketing : How to Create, Win, and Dominate Markets* by Philip Kotler
- *Differentiate or Die : Survival in Our Era of Killer Competition* by Jack Trout
- *The Starbucks Experience: 5 Principles for Turning ordinary into Extraordinary* by Joseph A. Michelli

### BOOKS ON CHURCH PLANTING OR FOR PLANTERS

- *The Radical Reformation* by Mark Driscoll
- *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern World* by Ed Stetzer
- *Revolutionary Communicator* by Jedd Medefind and Erik Lokkesmoe
- *Organic Church* by Neil Cole
- *Starting a New Church* by Ralph Moore
- *Elders and Leaders* Gene Getz
- *Reclaiming God's Original Intent for the Church* by Wes Roberts and Glenn Marshall

### MAGAZINES

- *Fast Company*
- *INC*
- *Relevant*
- *Business 2.0*

### CHURCH PLANT RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- ACTS 29 NETWORK | [www.acts29network.org](http://www.acts29network.org)
- Passion 4 Planting | [www.church-planting.net](http://www.church-planting.net)
- Church Planting Resources | [www.churchplantingresources.com](http://www.churchplantingresources.com)
- Xpansion | [www.xpansion.org](http://www.xpansion.org)
- Glocalnet | [www.glocal.net](http://www.glocal.net)

- Stadia | [www.stadia.cc](http://www.stadia.cc)
- Church Planting Village | [www.churchplantingvillage.net](http://www.churchplantingvillage.net)
- Church Multiplication Associates | [www.cmaresources.org](http://www.cmaresources.org)
- Ed Stetzer | [www.newchurches.com](http://www.newchurches.com)

#### **DIGITAL PRINTING COMPANIES**

- 4 Over | [www.4over.com](http://www.4over.com)
- On Demand Printing | [www.ondemandprinting.com](http://www.ondemandprinting.com)
- Vista Print | [www.vistaprint.com](http://www.vistaprint.com)

#### **BRANDING, DESIGN, OR WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT**

- The Branding Shed | [www.thebrandingshed.com](http://www.thebrandingshed.com) (I know this guy personally!)
- Net Ministry | [www.netministry.com](http://www.netministry.com)
- Aaron McClung Designs | [www.aaronmcclung.com](http://www.aaronmcclung.com)
- Brand Channel | [www.brandchannel.com](http://www.brandchannel.com)
- Tipping Sprung | [www.tippingsprung.com](http://www.tippingsprung.com)
- Element Fusion | [www.elementfusion.com](http://www.elementfusion.com)
- Lynch Pin Design | [www.lynchpindesign.com](http://www.lynchpindesign.com)

## APPENDIX B: BRANDING AND DESIGN QUESTIONNAIRE

These questions and forms are based on years of being in the branding and design profession. They will help you to determine direction, assess your needs, and provide excellent information for moving forward in the development of your brand, print media, or web media.

### **BRANDING:**

1. What type of message do you want your brand image to communicate to your audience?

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2. What do you want your audience to feel and experience when they come into contact with your church? (Including people, media, building, worship service, etc.)

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3. How would you define your church? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Describe your vision and mission in one short paragraph. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What are your goals for your church? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Who is your primary focus group? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Who is your secondary focus group? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Who are you really? (What is the true image of who you are as compared to who you might want to be) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. How will you determine whether or not your brand image or marketing is successful?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What type of look or feel do you want to incorporate into your brand image?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT:**

11. Do you have a design idea in mind for your logo?  Yes  No If yes, what is it?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Are there any existing logo designs that you like? If so, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you have any color preferences for your logo/identity?  Yes  No (If you know the RGB or Pantone color, please include them) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. What type of look or feel do you want to incorporate into your logo design?

Conservative    Contemporary    Hi-Tech    Retro    Cutting edge    Urban

Traditional    Young and Hip    Industrial    Suburban    Emergent

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

15. What is the one main thing you would like for your identity to communicate?

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**WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT:**

16. How do you plan to market your new web site? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What are the top three reasons a visitor would come to the site?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

18. Have you seen any web site designs that most relate to who you are or that fit your image?

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19. List some adjectives that will describe your site. \_\_\_\_\_

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20. If you currently have a web site, which features would you like to transition to the new site?

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21. Do you plan on having the design company implementing stock photography or will you provide your own photos?

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22. What kinds of images would you choose to use on your web site design and layout?

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23. What color preferences, if any, would you like to implement in the overall design of your web site?

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24. What would you define as the most important aspect or feature(s) of your web site?

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25. What main navigational links would you like to incorporate on your site?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_\_\_  
9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 \_\_\_\_\_

26. Do you have a domain name already registered?  Yes  No If yes, what is it? If, not what would be 3 preferences for your domain name? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. Do you have a hosting account set up? If so, where? \_\_\_\_\_

28. When do you plan on launching your site? \_\_\_\_\_

29. How will you determine if your web site is successful? \_\_\_\_\_

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30. Please rate the importance of features you require on your web site (Circle one)

1 = must have

2 = would like, but not critical at this time

3 = don't need

- 1 2 3 Who we are (our story, vision, core values, what we believe, staff bios)
- 1 2 3 Sundays (service information, small group information, special needs)
- 1 2 3 Mid week (men, women, children, teens, other groups and ministries)
- 1 2 3 Overview of each ministry
- 1 2 3 Calendar of events
- 1 2 3 Event registration
- 1 2 3 Online giving
- 1 2 3 Photo galleries
- 1 2 3 Audio sermons and sermon note downloads
- 1 2 3 E-mail newsletter
- 1 2 3 Welcome video
- 1 2 3 How you can help
- 1 2 3 Flash animation
- 1 2 3 Scripture of the day
- 1 2 3 Search engine
- 1 2 3 Online contact form
- 1 2 3 Shopping cart
- 1 2 3 Customized email addresses (i.e. [pastormike@yourchurch.org](mailto:pastormike@yourchurch.org))
- 1 2 3 Steps to salvation
- 1 2 3 Message boards
- 1 2 3 Prayer requests or testimonies
- 1 2 3 Polls
- 1 2 3 Blogging
- 1 2 3 Articles, reviews, recommended reading, links
- 1 2 3 Software that allows a non-programmer to update the site

**PRINT MEDIA NEEDS:**

What other items will you need to launch your church?

- Brand and Marketing Strategy
- Business Card
- Letterhead and Envelope
- Connect Card/Invite
- Encouragement Card
- Brochure
- Worship Folder/Bulletin
- Postcard/Direct Mail Piece
- Advertising: Newspaper or Magazine
- Banner
- Signage
- Door hangers
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please write down anything else that you feel may be beneficial or important to a brand designer or web developer that would help in the design of your project.

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