
3 Ways I Almost Killed My Church's Social Media Presence

by Josh Burns



Introduction

Recently I wrote about [the best way to kill your church's social media presence](#). I will take this post with me to my grave, and it's probably going to play a large part in my first book. The basic point of the post is that if you don't treat social media as a relationship platform then your church's social media presence will die. Plain and simple. But aside from this philosophy that should consume your church's social media strategy, there are also some other strategic mistakes that could kill your church's social media presence. That's what this little ebook is about. In fact I've made most of those mistakes, so I want to tell you what I've learned, and hopefully help you avoid those mistakes.

You may not be aware that you're making any mistakes, but hindsight is always 20/20. I've been there. My church's Facebook Page would've died a long time ago if I didn't learn from my mistakes. So I want to help you not only save your church's social media presence from death, but actually help it to thrive and reach people with the gospel. The good news is that these problems are easily fixed. All it takes is a bit of intentional planning and a small amount of effort.

So let's get started.

Here are 3 ways I almost killed my church's social media presence...

- Josh

1. I Shot from The Hip



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Shooting from the hip may have been helpful in the Wild West, but when it comes to social media for your church, if you're just posting quickly without a plan, then you're setting yourself up for failure. When you don't plan, you actually have to spend more time and mental energy creating posts and ideas on a daily basis. On the flipside you could instead be consolidating that time to plan an entire day, or week of posts and then schedule those posts in advance.

This method provides a couple advantages for you: It gives you more time throughout the week for other tasks that you may have on your plate. For myself as a church communicator, I'm working with different ministries throughout the week to create fliers, email invitations, webpage edits, announcement slides, and the list goes on. So if I don't take time to plan out a schedule of posts that fit into a larger strategy, then I'm just going to be haphazardly creating posts for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Another advantage this provides is that your church's social media posts will get more engagement. When you're just creating posts without a plan, you're most likely posting at random times of the day, and you may not be getting the reach from your posts that you would be able to otherwise. But compare that with a plan that is put into

place so that you know the exact peak times of day for your Facebook and Twitter followers, because I'm guessing one of your goals is for your posts to be seen by someone, right?

This doesn't mean you can't be contextual with your posts. Since you can't predict on a Monday what the weather is going to be like on Wednesday, you should leave some room for yourself to create posts that are contextual to your community as well. For example, a picture of a snowy morning in April here in Chicago could be a great engaging post on Instagram for the morning. That is something I wouldn't be able to schedule in advance, because it hasn't happened yet. But the majority of your posts do need to be planned.

A simple way to get started with a social media plan is to create a schedule for your church's social media channels. This could be Twitter and Facebook, or just Facebook, or just Twitter, whatever channels your community uses most often. All you need to do is create a spreadsheet calendar to plan out your posts. I could try to explain how to do this here, or you could just [download the calendar that I created for my church. It breaks down the posts by day and time and network. Get it here.](#)

2. I Copy and Pasted

Besides failing to create a plan for your church's social media presence, the second biggest mistake that churches make is to copy and paste content to multiple social networks without considering the context of that network. I get it. It's the easiest thing to do. And with your time and resources constantly being pulled in different directions it's often the easiest option. After all, who's going to notice that the same thing is being posted on Twitter and Facebook at the same time? They're different audiences, right? That may be true sometimes, but it lowers the quality of your church's social media presence more than you know.

There are a couple ways this hurts your church's social media presence. First, there are probably people following your church on both Twitter and Facebook and any other social network you're on, so people are going to see the same post in both places, and it just makes you look lazy. You and I know that you're not lazy, you're just busy, but your community doesn't know that. They just see the same post on both networks and eventually they'll stop paying attention to one or more of your social channels if they know they can get that content from just one of your channels.



[Tweet that!](#)

So instead of looking lazy, and running the risk of people not paying attention to your church's social media presence, you need to stop copy and pasting. Or at least stop copy and pasting without contextualizing to the social network. I know what you're thinking, "But how the heck am I supposed to have

enough content for one or multiple social media networks without using the same content?" That's where network contextualization comes in. What do I mean by that?

Network contextualization is how you create native content to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and all other social networks. For example, a short one-line quote is great on Twitter, and is practically guaranteed retweets, but if you're quoting someone that has a Twitter account, then by all means, please @mention that person after the quote. This not only attributes the quote to that person, but also notifies them of your tweet, and they may retweet it themselves.

Another example is that you could then use that same quote on Instagram by laying it over an artistic picture. Again, if the person being quoted has an Instagram account, please tag them in your post, and even use a hashtag in the post. Hashtags are huge on Instagram and may increase the discoverability of the image.

You could then use it on Facebook by recording someone's voice quoting that line, then overlay that audio on top of an artistic video. Also, you could add a line of text at the end of your post asking a question of your community, and have them leave a comment with an answer.

Boom.

I just gave you three different ways to use the same quote on three social networks without looking lazy, and while keeping your community engaged in all three posts.

Yes, this takes time. No, it's not always easy. But this is the type of intentionality that it takes for your church to use social media well, and to reach people everyday. I'll be honest, I don't always do a good job of this, but as long as you're trying then your community will notice.

3. I Was Inconsistent

If there's one thing that will kill your social media presence fast it is being inconsistent. Nothing says lazy like sporadic posting at various times throughout the week with no rhyme or reason. Again, I'm not saying that you are lazy, I'm just letting you know what people think when they see an inconsistent Facebook Page. They don't know everything else that you have going on, but you can't blame them for that. In this day and age, we owe more to our church's community than inconsistent encouragement and engagement, because that's basically what you're saying when you post inconsistently. Social media is the tool that we as the church have to connect with people throughout the week, and not just on the weekends. So if we're not using that to the best of our ability, then shame on us.

Think about it. How does a strong relationship with a person grow? Through consistent time, energy, engagement, and conversation.

When you're not providing that on social media, then you can't expect people to engage with you when you do post.

Thankfully there are some easy solutions to this problem, and much of them tie into the solution to the first mistake which was lack of planning. If you have a social media calendar in place for the week, then that will definitely help you avoid this mistake. Another thing you need to do is learn about what times your community is online. At my church there are specific times when I post on specific days based on when our community is on Facebook and Twitter. Facebook makes this really simple by providing you with [a graph of when your Facebook fans are online](#). On Twitter you may have to take a little more time to analyze the times when you are getting the most engagement, but you can still figure it out.

One of the biggest reasons that this is a [problem for churches](#) is because often they believe there is a lack of content for posting. If they don't have a repository of content to create posts, then they'll just post to Facebook when something is pressing or urgent. So finding that content to create posts is important as well, but that may be easier than you think.

Of all the mistakes I've made on social media for my church, this one was probably the easiest to fix. When I realized that [my church was a factory of content](#) that was being produced on a weekly basis, I had more material for posting than I knew what to do with. All I had to do was take the time to collect and curate that content for my church's

social networks, and all of the sudden our social media presence was seeing more engagement with our community that it ever had before.



[Tweet that!](#)

These are just a few of the mistakes I've made in my church's social media presence, and they are some of the biggest ones I've seen other churches make as well. Which is why I'm hoping that I can help you avoid them as you engage in social media for your church. If you can correct or completely avoid these mistakes, then you'll be on your way to reaching more people than ever before with your church's social media presence. And that's what it's all about. Because at the end of the day those Twitter followers, and Facebook Likes all represent [real people](#) with [real stories](#), and if you can remember that when you're creating that Facebook post then you'll always be doing it for the right reasons.

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