

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Best of 2022: Do We Really Need to Keep (or Start) Doing Digital Ministry? (Replay) - Episode 277

Our Best Episodes of 2022

Many churches tried to ignore digital ministry for as long as we could and, even now, many of us are *still* trying to avoid it. In this episode, we invited Tiffany Deluccia, Director of Sales and Marketing for The Unstuck Group to join us and discuss the common question: Do churches *really* need to keep doing (or start doing) digital ministry?

An Interview with Tiffany Deluccia, Director of Sales & Marketing

So, do large churches really need to keep going with digital strategy?

Tiffany: Yes, but **only** if you are committed to understanding the “why” and getting better. After all, bad digital strategies can be like bad billboards: really effective at destroying your credibility with people in your community.

We often hear pastors make the argument: “We don’t believe people should spend so much time on social media,” or “We won’t do online because we believe ministry happens in person.” But we have to be honest: We’re not going to influence how much time people spend on social media or how likely they are to come to in-person gatherings by taking that position. Instead, we’re relinquishing an opportunity for influence by ignoring this area.

What about the church that *tried* and went from feeling like digital strategies were worth their time and then weren’t, and then got burnt out—What should they do now?

Tiffany: Now is the perfect time to go back to basics. A good strategist *always* starts with moving the starting point towards clear and simple. Ultimately, your digital ministry strategy cannot be an *addition* to your “real” ministry methods. You need to dig all the way down to the foundation of your ministry and then start answering these key questions:

- Who are you trying to reach?

- How are you reaching them now? (What's already working for you? What's driving growth?)
- If you're losing people, why are they leaving? (What are they choosing instead?)
- Who is your competition? (HINT: It's probably not other churches. How is culture attempting to meet the needs only God and the local church can truly meet?)
- How are you perceived in your community? (Is the perception true? Do you need to change it?)
- What are your goals for trying a new strategy? (How will you know you're winning?)
- Who does what on your team? (Who owns and drives each goal?)

If those sound more big picture than specifically related to digital strategy, it's because they ARE. **Strategy does not exist in a vacuum. It responds to objectives.** If you know what you're trying to do, THEN you can decide what digital strategies (and non-digital ones) can help solve problems to meet an objective. And if you don't know what you're trying to do, pause all proactive digital strategies and get clear on that first.

We talk a lot about the need for churches who want healthy growth to have both a reach strategy *and* discipleship strategy. Where does a digital strategy fit into that conversation?

Tiffany: It's going to be a tool in the toolbox for both, but if you have to prioritize one over the other, prioritize reach. Here are some tips for improving how you reach new people with digital strategies:

1. Pick an audience. Name the personas. Get specific.
2. Pick digital strategies that will reach *those* people. The right channels, the right types of content.
3. Think LOCAL. Design your content and your strategies to reach that specific person in your community. Show how your church is FOR your community.
4. Know what you're trying to accomplish. Your win may not be any other church's win.
5. Don't put insider messages in outsider spaces. Filter EVERYTHING you share through the lens of your mission field.
6. Equip your insiders to share your digital content. If they are NOT sharing it, you need to ask them why.
7. Have ONE person on your team who oversees the alignment of your digital strategy to your ministry strategy across all ministry areas. Keep all your ministry leaders on the same page about the digital strategies you've decided on, how they are to be used, and how you'll measure the wins.
8. Try, evaluate, double-down or abandon, and repeat.

Final Thoughts

If you're looking for a place to get started, look around your church and ask: "Who's missing?" Then ask: "Where are those people spending time online? How do we reach those people specifically?" It's okay to start really small and only focus on the digital strategies (the right channels and the right content) that will reach that specific group of people.

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