

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Reaching New People Through Events

- Episode 334

Reaching & Connecting New People

Churches are telling us that there's no shortage of new people walking through their doors each weekend—but they're struggling with how to connect and mobilize them into next steps.

In the first episode of our new series, Tony and Amy explain how to use (and how not to use) strategic events to reach new people.

How Events Can Hurt the Church

#1: Events are often targeted for people who are already connected to the church, but they don't help people actually take a next step towards Christ. In other words, they keep church people busy, but don't help people become more like Jesus.

#2: Churches tend to over-schedule: all-church events, family events, women's events, men's events, couple's events, single's events, groups events, etc. Multiple events compete with each other for people's time and attention, drain the team, and shift focus from key mission priorities.

#3: When churches *do* host events for people who are not already connected to them, the focus tends to be on how many attend the event rather than if the event helps people connect to faith and the church. Big events make us *feel* like we're making a big investment in the mission, but if it's not leading people to faith and connection with a church, it's probably a poor investment.

Healthy, strategic events can be used to reach new people and connect them to your church. But if the events you're planning this year don't fit into that category of "healthy and strategic," we would advise against them. **We don't need to add to the noise.**

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Events

We have to start with the end goal in mind. Meaning, there should be a clear win that's been defined *before* the event is even planned.

Healthy Events: The win is helping people take a next step after the event.

Unhealthy Events: The win is getting people to show up to the event.

Healthy Events: The primary way people hear about the event is through the invitation of a friend.

Unhealthy Events: The primary way people hear about the event is through promotions.

Healthy Events: Guests are expected, so every part of the experience is planned with that in mind.

Unhealthy Events: Since guests are not expected, certain elements don't need as much attention.

Healthy Events: After the event, there is a debrief to make sure the win was accomplished.

Unhealthy Events: After the event, you just communicate how many people showed up.

Healthy Events: Every year the events are evaluated to make sure they are fulfilling their purpose of connecting new people to the church.

Unhealthy Events: Every year the events are scheduled because they're expected.

Church Event Best Practices

Best practices for event planning:

1. Limit the number of all-church events throughout the year (Christmas, Easter, Summer, Fall). For the sake of your staff's time and energy, the already-busy schedules of everyone you're inviting, and the success of the event, choose all-church events wisely.
2. Reassess ministry-specific events (women's, men's, etc.) to make sure the win is helping people take a next step towards Jesus... and that win is actually being accomplished. A lot of these events tend to fall under the category of "we've always done them" and typically cater to insiders.
3. Map out all events at the same time, so that events don't compete with each other and don't compete with the primary mission strategy (like worship, groups, serving, missions engagement, etc.) More events with more promotions to encourage people to attend means there's going to be more noise.
4. Connect your events directly to your weekend services. Rather than inviting someone to an event *then* trying to invite them to attend a worship service, the event is built in and around the worship service.

Best practices for leveraging events to reach new people:

1. Make sure the events have a purpose, and that the purpose is measurable: when you gather to evaluate the event, you can know for sure whether you've achieved that goal.
2. Create solutions to capture contact information from new people, whether through pre-registrations, QR codes, texting, etc.
3. Follow up and encourage people to come back for a service. Don't wait too long, and don't let this fall to the back burner.
4. Track the data. Are the events your church is designing to reach new people *actually* reaching new people and connecting them to church and faith? Can you measure the success of the event by something other than attendance?

If the data isn't showing what you'd hoped to see, it's time to brainstorm creative ways to engage people *besides* an event.

Listen to the full episode on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode334.

Free Webinar: Reaching & Connecting New People in 2024

In this free webinar, ministry voices from North Point, Sun Valley Community Church, and Victory Hill Church will walk through proven strategies and best practices for creating intentional weekend services that reach and connect with new people. [Register now.](#)

Special Thanks to Our Sponsor for This Episode



Giving presents challenges for growing churches. Cumbersome donation forms and dated administrative features of most giving systems leave you lacking the tools

you need. But, SecureGive's 7-in-1 system makes donating easy and secure, provides in-depth analytics and management tools for your team, and integrates with your Church Management System. It's the system that scales to fit the needs of growing churches.

For our Unstuck listeners, SecureGive is offering 6 months of free software to get your church started. Visit SecureGive.com/unstuck to learn more.