

Marketing Team Report Annual Membership Meeting Packet Prepared February 1, 2005

In April 2004, the marketing team was formed and asked by the Board to put together a formal marketing plan and a budget. We chose a manual from the Association of Unity Churches entitled, "Growing Your Spiritual Community" as the handbook for preparing it. (If you're interested in learning about the components of a marketing plan, see attached.)

Over the next several weeks, we designed flyers for church events including the Tibetan monks visit, the World Day of Prayer, and the Power of Intention class and placed them in coffee shops, bookstores and other venues around town. We also placed flyers at Studio 28 and other locations to invite movie-goers who saw "What the Bleep Do We Know" to come our church "where the principles in the movie were taught and practiced."

We reviewed the welcome packet questionnaire filled out by guests during the last two years and found that no one had come to our church as a result of our newspaper advertising. So we recommended to the Board that we discontinue spending the \$50 per week and instead use the funds for other more effective advertising. We also purchased four one-day sponsorships on WYCE radio to use to announce upcoming events. These are still available.

Following the direction of the Unity manual and Rev. Beverly, in June we suspended all marketing planning and many activities until the Peaceworks process was completed. The manual states, "...elements that should be addressed before beginning a (marketing) plan are: 1) resolution of any major crises that may interfere with long-term thinking during the process, and 2) Board, staff and key lay leaders (must be) characterized by harmony and low levels of conflict, if at all..." The reasoning for this is that it is very difficult to promote your church to outsiders and expect them to return when there is turmoil, and second, it is unlikely that the marketing team can be successful in the midst of mixed expectations and competing goals.

In October, we conducted the Member/Congregant survey and received 54 responses. Using the results, we put together a preliminary analysis of the strengths and weaknesses (enclosed) of our church. On November 14 the marketing team shared this information with the Board.

When it became apparent that the issues that surfaced as a result of the Peaceworks process, the survey, and the strengths and weaknesses analysis could not be resolved by the church leadership, the marketing team suspended any further meetings.

Over the past month, we have talked with the Board and many of you about whether we should actively start promoting to bring new people to our church. The consensus is that we should focus on our current members and congregants while we work through our visioning, healing and reorganization.

We've started by helping the Board and church leaders to better communicate with you through letters and emails.

Would you be surprised to learn that our most important marketing tool is you? The Member/Congregant survey found that 58% of those surveyed came to UCPC because of invitations from family and friends. Through your conversations, phone calls, cards, Newleadership group e-mails, fellowship hall conversations and informal social get-togethers, you make the difference in keeping everyone informed and involved. Let's pray for each other that God work through us all to unify our congregation and to provide ways to personally reach out to our church family members that are loved and missed.

Our second best tool is the church web site, <http://www.unitygr-walker.org>. If you haven't yet visited it, please do. Robert Temple recently redesigned and updated it. Over the next few weeks, we'll add several sections, including a current calendar, stories and photos of our activities and youth ministry, an audio loop of each week's lessons, and the statement of Unity principles. We welcome any additional ideas you have.

In early March, possibly sooner, we'll invite you to a brainstorming session to come up with ideas for the web site, programs, services, activities, and other ways reach out to our community. Details to come...we really hope you'll join us in helping to design the future of Unity Church of Practical Christianity.

Respectfully submitted,

Your UCPC Marketing Team

Jill Armstrong, Chair
Keith Mullins, Vice Chair
Eric Bowers
Shannan Denison
James Murphy
Robert Temple, ex-officio member
Tom Hale, ex-officio member

Marketing Plan Components
Association of Unity Churches
“Growing Your Spiritual Community” manual

A good marketing plan consists of eight sections...

1. Executive summary
2. Background/situation analysis: Church history, goals, programs, services, classes, activities and the church's previous marketing approach
3. Internal audit: Congregational preferences, demographics, internal strengths and weaknesses. The member/congregant survey in October completed this step.

The rest of the marketing plan will be worked on over the next several weeks...

4. External Audit: The surrounding community's preferences and demographics, trends, competition, opportunities and threats.
5. Positioning strategy & tactics: Who you will focus your resources on as a primary target and what programs, services, classes, and activities are needed
6. Marketing tactics: specific tools to use like radio, newspaper, direct mail, publicity, web site, etc.
7. Implementation plan: Calendar of activities and dates
8. Budget

Unity Church – Walker
Strengths and Weaknesses
Nov. 12, 2004; Board revisions (in light type) Nov.14, 2004

Strengths

Beautiful church grounds and facility
Financial accounting system
Personal accountability
Minister availability
Sunday service
Quantity/quality of classes
Inspiration/love/connection with God
Like-minded spiritual ideals
Healing/hope/progressive thought
A place for seekers
Community/fellowship/friends
Welcoming place/warmth/positive energy
Sense of belonging/a place of “feelings”
Hospitality/food & beverages
Sermons and lessons
Music program (note that survey was completed prior to Bryan’s departure)

Weaknesses

Low attendance
Declining attendance
Small number of volunteers
Tithing/financial stability in deficit
Turnover and positions unfilled in church leadership
Unresolved issues among board, minister, key lay leaders and members
Need more communication, openness, and personal responsibility
Members should have a unified, common vision for the future of the church,
including what role the minister and congregants will play
Proper interpretation of the Bible not in agreement among members
Extended timeline of peacemaking/reconciliation process
Music program, need for diversity of music?
More outreach needed/more community interaction
Welcoming process needs improvement

Note: Complete survey results are available for viewing in the church office.