FellowshipOne™

YOU WERE CALLED TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE WHERE YOU ARE

4 LESSONS CHURCHES CAN LEARN FROM FACEBOOK'S QR CODE STUNT

Did you hear about this?

Menlo Park, CA, March 26, 2012
As part of a beautification project in their new headquarters, 30 Facebook engineers spent the night of the company's "Hackathon 29" event painting a 42 square foot QR code on the roof of their building. Apparently, it is big enough to see from space.

Mark Pike, the father of the brainchild, said *"Some engineers in the crowd determined the optimal orientation of the grid, consulting satellite print-outs and knowledge of local flight paths. Meanwhile, a few of us got to work chalking out a 42-foot square with 2-foot pixels. After we triple-checked the layout, we started putting down paint and hoping we didn't mess anything up. I felt like a digital Tom Sawyer convincing folks to come up to the roof to paint this funny project…"*

Until the code was completed in the early morning hours, the project creators didn't know if their code would work. (It did.) There's nothing of substance at the page the QR code links to, but that may not even be the point.

What *is* the point?
Ultimately, Facebook's point was marketing, but there's a ministry lesson in there, too.

What is your church's "code"?
Ministry leaders constantly ponder how to attract, retain and grow visitors into committed members, who then grow spiritually and engage as volunteers, leaders and servants. It can be like the work of the Facebook guys, painting an intricate code in the dark of night, never really sure how successful your various efforts will be when the sun comes up. Ministry leaders can relate. They're trying to take the pulse of hundreds or thousands of people, and then crossmatch those unstable data points with current societal trends. No one can take away the inherent uncertainty of this effort.

Still, church leaders can learn a few tips from the Facebook team about running with creative ideas, giving direction to our efforts and minimizing costly mistakes:

1. EXECUTE IDEAS THAT REPRESENT YOUR CHURCH'S PERSONA
Facebook's street address is 1 Hacker Way.

Megan Garber, staff writer at The Atlantic suggests the QR code idea can be viewed as "a rooftop reminder of the youthfulness (black paint! cold beer!) that drives one of the most powerful companies in the world… 'The Hacker Way', she says, "is Facebook's **culture** as much as it is its **marketing message**."

In other words, this stunt fits who Facebook is. Churches need to do the same thing.

Don't try to copy what other churches are doing. Match the needs of your community and church's demographic to your church's…well, demographic:

• Listen to the ideas of your members and visitors
• Support internal, grassroots lay ministry initiatives
• See where the energy is. Ride the wave of what God is doing among your people rather the wave "over there"
• Launch ideas your congregation is able and willing to execute and support.

Staying up with the times is important, but if you advertise something that doesn't fit your church's personality, you will attract people who don't fit and who will be able to sense the inauthenticity.

2. UTILIZE AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY WHERE POSSIBLE

The Facebook guys:
• Imagined a bolder way to use a high-level technology
• Found a way to reduce the complexity of the QR code design (choose a short URL)
• Consulted satellite and flight data to determine placement
• Strapped a camera contraption to a homemade, remote controlled helicopter and flew it over the roof in order to take photos of the code.

Yes, these are tech geeks who went to extreme measures, but there is a valid lesson to learn here: Though the code was put in place through manual means, the technology and the intel it provided allowed them to make their marketing masterpiece "successful."

Likewise for churches in today's culture, *people* have to make the connections that result in attraction, assimilation and transformation of visitors to members. They'll be much more effective, however, if they do that alongside and via technology designed to make connecting simple and efficient. If you want to attract younger people, you will have to offer the services they've become accustomed to using: online registration, payment and giving, etc.

The real work of today's church-oriented technology, however, is the behind the scenes data management that allows for superior process flow, exceptional member care, and high-level reporting that shows leaders where the real ministry opportunities are.

3. HAVE METHOD TO YOUR MADNESS

While Facebook's QR code is somewhat useless, it wasn't sloppily executed. QR Code craftsmen planned their design and method first, then triple-checked the layout before painting. They also saw the big picture. Beautification wasn't the point, the link wasn't the point, free press wasn't even the point. The QR code will put them on the map: the Google satellite map.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR CHURCH'S "CODE" REALLY WORKS?

When you think about what will put your church "on the map" in your community, you won't want to do meaningless things, but you will want to make sure you are doing whatever you do well. For Facebook, that meant PLAN, DESIGN, TRIPLE-CHECK, and MOVE FORWARD (even in the dark).

That's a plan even God could approve, although He would add PRAYER to every step.

4. HAVE FAITH AND GET EXCITED.

The Facebook workers' enthusiasm raised volunteer rates in the project by 600% during the production period. They started with 5 people

and ended with 30. All they could do was hope the code worked. They had faith. Undoubtedly, they had some fun too. Faith and enjoyment are quality components of church engagement, as well. Will your church's "code"—the unique approach it uses to connect and grow people—work? No one can say for sure. The best you can do is implement a strategy backed up with due diligence, quality technology tools, and a team of people full of faith and enthusiasm.

PARTNER WITH US
Connect with one of our church management software specialists today

844.459.8525

Info@FellowshipOne.com

FellowshipOne.com