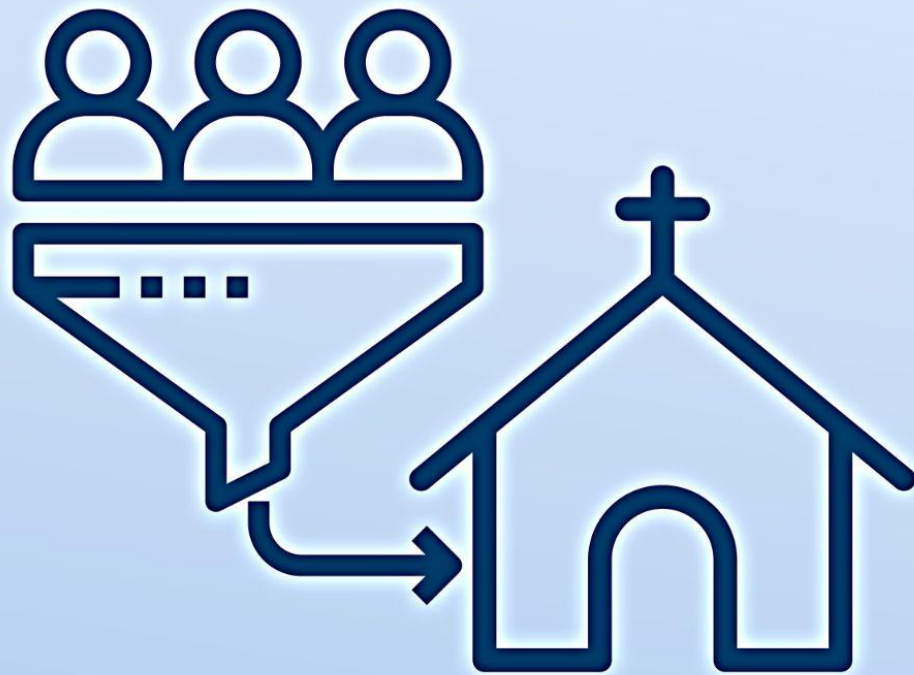


PLAN YOUR — VISIT — PLAYBOOK



**The Church Marketing Strategy
That Gets 20-50
New Visitors Every Month**

BRADY STICKER

Want Brady and the ChurchCandy team to set up and manage your church's Plan Your Visit ads? Start getting new guests every Sunday and [Schedule a Demo!](#)

Plan Your Visit Playbook
The Church Marketing Strategy That Generates 20-50 New Visitors Every Month
By Brady Sticker

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Preface

The Plan Your Visit strategy is a proven church marketing plan that will grow your ministry in exciting ways. If you want to consistently have new visitors at your church, then this book is for you.

My home church uses the Plan Your Visit strategy to bring 20-50 new people through our doors every month. I started ChurchCandy Marketing to share this successful strategy with as many churches as possible. It has been an honor to see God use my marketing company to draw more people into the Kingdom.

I've wanted to do Kingdom-building work ever since I was in kindergarten and told my dad, "When I get big, I want the church to be my job." It made him so proud that he wrote it down in his Bible. Only God could have started my story there, led me into marketing, then to ministry, and now to a marketing ministry!

For the past six years, I've run a digital marketing agency with my dad in the chiropractic industry. We've helped thousands of chiropractors scale their businesses. My dad used to work for a chiropractor, and that's how he fell in love with that profession. I was just a Bible college student when ChiroCandy really started to take off.

Believe it or not, I've never been super passionate about chiropractics. I like helping chiropractors grow their business and hearing stories of patients overcoming pain without surgery or medications, but I don't have a heart for chiropractics like my dad does. I have a heart for ministry.

It was while I was at Christ For The Nations, a Bible school in Dallas, that God opened my eyes to how much the "Big-C" church needed what we had been doing for chiropractors.

Chiropractors need patients and churches need visitors. Digital marketing can provide both. If a Chiropractor can turn \$1 worth of paid ads into \$5 of revenue from new patients, why can't a church use the same strategy to get new guests?

During my six years as the COO of ChiroCandy Marketing, we helped hundreds of chiropractors grow their businesses. Currently, over 100,000 people go to a chiropractor every month because of ChiroChandy Marketing. Now my goal is to draw 100,000 people to a local church through ChurchCandy Marketing.

The Plan Your Visit strategy is the foundation for ChurchCandy Marketing's church growth formula, and I'm excited to bring these insights to even more people through this book.

Even if you're already familiar with the Plan Your Visit strategy, you will still get a lot of value from this book. We'll cover what the strategy is and why it's important. I will explain how to use paid ads to get tons of families planning a visit to your church. Then I'll go over the Plan Your Visit follow-up strategies, what to do when a new visitor shows up for church, and so much more.

If you get overwhelmed reading this, and would like help implementing these strategies in your church, you can schedule a free strategy session with me or one of our team members at churchcandy.com.

Chapter 1: Everything you know about digital marketing for your church is wrong

Using digital marketing to grow your church can sound daunting. You may be wondering, *Where do I even start? I have a website and we post regularly on Instagram and Facebook. Isn't that enough?* The truth is that those pretty websites and regular social media posts will not bring you new visitors every Sunday.

If you really want to reach your community, help people take the next steps in their relationship with Jesus, and have new families at your church every week, then you need a proven digital marketing plan. This is where the Plan Your Visit strategy comes into play.

You are already doing amazing, disciple-making work. Digital marketing just brings more people to what you're already doing. And I'll show you how to do it with the Plan Your Visit strategy.

To put it simply, the Plan Your Visit strategy gets people to plan a visit to your Sunday service. First, they fill out an online form saying they'll come on Sunday. Next, you follow up to thank them for planning a visit and remind them about the service. Then BOOM! You have a new family at your church.

Simple enough, right? Well... there's a lot of strategy that goes into it. This book will teach you how to drive traffic to your Plan Your Visit form, the best way to run your Plan Your Visit ads, and how to follow up with people who plan visits.

You might be thinking, "But Brady! I already have a Plan Your Visit form on my site!"

That's awesome! ...but that's only 1 small piece of the puzzle.

But before we dive into the Plan Your Visit strategy, we need a clear foundation on how and why Christians should engage with digital marketing and social media in the first place.

I think we can all agree the world is filled with evil. Just look at social media: I wonder how many hours people waste on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. I wonder how

many pornography addictions or even affairs have been fueled by social media. Most pastors that I know would agree that social media has had a net-negative effect on the world.

But what if we could take what the devil meant for evil and use it to grow the Church? We have the greatest message of all time, and social media can help us share it with the world. Every successful business uses social media to get new customers. So why can't the Church use social media to get new church members?

Looking to the business world for wisdom is Biblical. The Parable of the Shrewd Manager in Luke 16 is about a manager who is fired by his master. To win back his job, the manager contacted his master's debtors and negotiated down how much the master owed them.

Jesus says "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light" (Luke 16:18).

The main thing I want to point out here is the word "shrewd." I used to think that shrewd meant rude or mean or greedy. But, in this parable, Jesus commends shrewd people. He's using the word "shrewd" more like "wise." The true definition of shrewd is having sharp powers of judgment. And, in this case, those judgments made the manager a good businessman.

Jesus is saying that many worldly people are better at business than Christians. And marketing is part of business. So, I believe that ministries should look at shrewd, secular businesses and think, "How can we use that for our church? How can I take those same principles and apply them to my ministry?"

If thousands of businesses use social media to get more customers, then we can adapt those strategies for our churches. We can look at what secular businesses are doing well and learn from them. Then we will be shrewder and wiser in our marketing.

We can also look to Jesus for a marketing example. Jesus went to where people were paying attention. He talked to big crowds. If people were in the city, he went to preach in the city. He went to the people and sought their attention.

Where are people paying attention now? People are on their phones. They are looking at social media. That is where we need to go to get their attention. Following Jesus' command to go into the world and make disciples doesn't only involve overseas mission trips. Most of the world is online. You can reach them there, too.

So, how do you do that? It starts with having a measurable goal. You have to determine what you want out of your social media strategy. Some churches only want a message board. They use their Facebook page to let people know about events happening inside the four walls of their church. Their audience is usually only current church members.

Other churches seek engagement for the sake of engagement. There is a lot of marketing advice out there that is focused on engagement. And that's fine if that's what you want, but comments on a Facebook post won't grow your ministry, and getting re-shares on Instagram isn't going to make disciples.

There is another option: You can use social media as a form of outreach. Then instead of likes and shares, you will be getting new visitors into your church. And that gives you an opportunity to help them take the next step in their relationship with God. If that's your goal, then I can give you a strategy to make it happen.

Using the Plan Your Visit strategy makes it very easy for you to get new visitors. It is one of the main reasons that my home church has grown significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Plan Your Visit strategy helped us grow so much that we had to knock down walls and expand our building. Our church doubled (attendance and building square footage) during the pandemic, largely because of this strategy.

Right now, our church mainly uses the Plan Your Visit strategy on Facebook and Instagram, because they are the dominant platforms. Also, since Facebook and Instagram are both owned by META, it's pretty easy to set them both up at the same time.

Facebook and Instagram won't always be the top social media platforms. TikTok is up and coming. We've already started using TikTok in both our church and our chiropractic marketing agency. And there's sure to be another platform that comes up down the road. Thankfully, the principles of the Plan Your Visit strategy date all the way back to the days of direct mail marketing. So, even if the platform changes, the strategy stays the same.

If you've decided to use social media for church growth and outreach, you need to focus on quantity over quality. Yes, you read that correctly. If you strive for the highest quality content, chances are you are going to do a lot less of it. It takes too much time to set up the fancy camera equipment, perfect the lighting, do the video editing, add the background music, and place the logo bumpers. You won't be able to put out content for your ads frequently enough.

But the other problem with overly-produced content is that it looks like a commercial. And ever since Tivo came out years ago, no one wants to watch commercials. We all skip over them. The bottom line is that you don't want your ads to look like ads. If you do, people will just scroll right by it.

Now, that doesn't mean that you shouldn't make good content. You can still make great, meaningful videos, just don't make them look like commercials. People don't want to be sold to. What they really crave is authenticity.

People are tired of inauthenticity in the church. If you are authentic in your marketing, then people won't stop at online engagement. They will actually show up at your church on Sunday. They'll get involved and want to be part of your community.

I truly believe that there's never been a better time to be in ministry than today. The resources we have now weren't available 20 years ago. In fact, a lot of these tools weren't around even five years ago. So, I just want to encourage you to keep at it. There's a learning curve to social media and implementing the Plan Your Visit strategy in your marketing, but once you get it down, you will see tremendous growth.

Now you may be thinking, "Oh, it's not about the numbers." But each number is a soul. Each number is a life. Each number is someone that needs to know Jesus. Reaching out to people is what the great commission is all about. Every seat in your sanctuary is an opportunity to change someone's life with the message of Jesus.

Once you decide to use social media as a form of outreach, the next step is to decide how much money to spend on it. You have to be a good steward of your church's resources. That starts with a measurable goal. How many new families do you want visiting your church? And how much are you willing to spend to get a new family involved in your church? These are hard questions to answer, but they're vital to making

a powerful marketing plan. We'll cover this in greater detail throughout the Plan Your Visit Playbook.

If you don't have a plan for your marketing, you're basically flushing money down the toilet. Just the other day, I saw an ad for a church in another state that was promoting the live stream of their Sunday service. I can guarantee you that no new families showed up that next Sunday from that ad. That's a waste of money and poor stewardship of their church's money.

That may sound harsh, but being a good steward of your church's finances is so important. If you're not setting measurable goals and using well-thought-out strategies to reach those goals, then you're wasting money.

The whole Plan Your Visit strategy is based on direct response marketing. We'll go into more detail about this concept in the next chapter. For now, all you need to know is that this kind of marketing encourages people to take a specific action. The term for this is a "call to action." In this case, the direct response you are looking for is to get a family to visit your church.

Direct response marketing is different from more traditional types of advertising, such as branding. Where direct response marketing gives people an action to do, branding shows people what to look at. Or another way to say it is that branding is marketing that gets people to know about your church, while direct response is marketing that gets people in the door of your church.

Don't get me wrong, there's a time and a place for branding. I think you should actively post content on your social media pages for branding purposes and to get engagement. But just know that branding won't always bring new visitors to your church. That's where direct response marketing and the Plan Your Visit strategy are important.

This story may help you understand the difference:

One day I was pushing my son, River, around in a shopping cart at the grocery store. As he was babbling and trying to grab items off the shelves, I noticed an ad on the cart. I leaned in closer to read, "Does cart advertising work? It just did!" It made me laugh and wonder about their definition of "work." Was it working just because I saw it? Was their only goal to have someone look at their ad?

That ad gave me information but didn't prompt a response. There was no call to action, other than "Call Now." It may have gotten my attention, but it didn't get my business. And your church doesn't just need eyeballs on an ad, you need people walking into Sunday service. Direct response marketing does more than tell your church's name and show off your pretty logo, it gives people a concrete next step to take.

The power of direct response marketing was on display at the 2022 Super Bowl. I'm a big fan of Super Bowl commercials, and this one has to be my favorite. Do you remember that episode of The Office where the employees are all staring at the bouncing DVD logo on the TV screensaver? Then they cheer when it hits the corner perfectly?

Coin Base had a Super Bowl ad that was only a QR code bouncing around the screen, just like DVD players did back in the day. Without saying anything, the Coin Base ad directed people to take out their phones and click on the code. The call to action was to use the QR code. Do you think it was effective? So many people took action on their QR code that it crashed their website! That is the power of direct response marketing.

The best part about direct response marketing is how measurable it is. You can measure how much money you put in and what kind of a return you get back. And Facebook ads make this even simpler. You can literally budget how many dollars you want to spend a day, decide which population will see those ads, and then measure how many clicks, Plan Your Visit forms, and new visitors you get.

Direct response marketing makes it easier for you to determine your return on investment (ROI). ROI is a business term, but it applies to churches, too. Initially, and most importantly, your investment should bring people to your church so they can grow in their walk with Jesus.

However, you also have to look at the business side of the investment. Now see my heart with this. Obviously, people are not dollars and cents. But it's important to use wisdom and good stewardship with your marketing to make sure you're recouping the money you invest.

You don't want to waste your church's money. If a family visits and eventually joins your church, there's a good chance that they'll start giving financially. Then there will be a financial return on your financial investment.

Let's look at the numbers: The average household in America makes around \$4,500 a month. If they tithe 10%, then that's \$450 in additional giving for your church. If you get 10 new tithing families a month from your marketing campaigns, then that will bring over \$4,000 a month in additional giving.

Again, your main focus and motivation is reaching hearts, not wallets. But, if you're committed to being a good steward of your church's resources, then you have to ask: "How much will I spend to get a new family plugged into my church?"

Don't worry, you don't need to know the answer right now. You're going to learn a lot more in this book that will inform your response. For now, it's enough to just wrap your head around the question, take it to the Lord in prayer, and discuss it with other leaders at your church.

Action Items:

- 1) Honestly assess your church's prior marketing efforts. Have you been more focused on posts to get engagement? Or have you been setting goals for growing your ministry?
- 2) What do you want from social media and your church? Are you just putting out announcements, a place to seek engagement for the sake of engagement, or a tool for church growth?
- 3) Are your current marketing efforts more about branding or direct response marketing? How do you think changing that might affect your church?

Chapter 2: Marketing Basics

I always thought that churches were bad at marketing. That's not entirely true. We're bad at direct response marketing, but we're great at branding (or at least we think we're good at branding).

Many churches put a lot of effort into building their brand. They have websites with catchy mission statements, amazing logos, exciting program names, and striking color schemes. The branding will show up on church bulletins, flyers, and signs.

Churches with great branding often approach social media as another way to grow their brand. They spend a lot of time creating cool Instagram graphics or crafting on-brand messaging. And then it can be frustrating when that effort doesn't translate into more people coming to their church.

The problem is that many churches focus exclusively on branding and ignore direct response marketing. They think that branding equals marketing. But the truth is that branding is only the very first step of marketing.

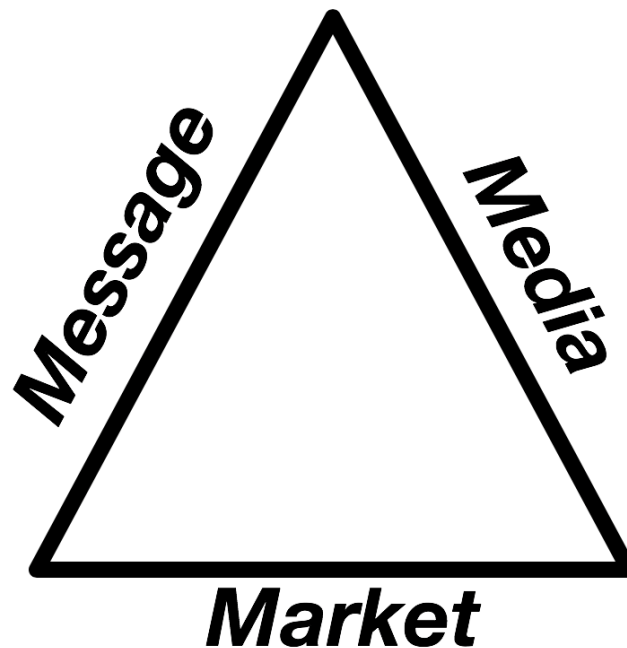
Branding gets people's attention but doesn't get them into your church. Branding makes people look but doesn't encourage them to act. There is a more powerful form of marketing that will actually help you grow your church: Direct response marketing.

In order to understand direct response marketing with the Plan Your Visit strategy, you need to learn some marketing basics. We'll cover the marketing triangle, the AIDA Formula, and the PAST Formula. Then, at the end of the chapter, I'll give you some action steps to put these concepts into practice at your church.

The Marketing Triangle (Market, Message, Media)

"Always enter the conversation already occurring in the customer's mind." ~Dan Kennedy

Dan Kennedy is the godfather of direct response marketing. A lot of the information in this chapter comes from taking his principles and applying them to the church context. First, we'll look at his idea of the marketing triangle.



Dan Kennedy's Marketing Triangle consists of three basic components:

- Market
- Message
- Media

Market

This is who you want to see your ad. You have to know and define your avatar. Your avatar is the ideal person that you want to reach. Many of you will say, "We're trying to reach everyone." As great as that sounds, it's not possible. If you try to appeal to everyone, you end up appealing to no one. And if you don't address the right person in the right way, your message will fall flat and not give you the results you want.

The more specific your avatar is, the more effective it will be. You can start by narrowing down your avatar's geographical location, age, interests, family life, and other demographics. Then you can narrow in on what your avatar wants and needs. One great question to ask yourself is "What keeps them up at night?" That will tell you what they're thinking about and want to hear more about during the day.

Message

This is your mission statement. For example, at Vibrant Church, it's "we're real people with a real passion to live Vibrant life in Jesus." That breaks down into some more subcategories. We emphasize that it's our goal to help as many people as possible to live a vibrant life in Jesus.

Your message has to appeal to your market. It has to hit on their pain points and give them what they need. Some popular message options for churches are connection or community or deeper meaning or greater joy.

Media

What media are you going to use to deliver your message? You have plenty of options: newspapers, magazines, direct mail, TV, radio, and the internet. In this book, we are going to focus on online marketing and, specifically, social media marketing.

I'm going to teach you how to use Facebook ads to bring visitors into your church. You may choose multiple kinds of media to reach your market with your message.

All three parts of the marketing triangle are important. You need to put in the time and energy to identify, understand, and clarify each one. If you leave any of them out, your marketing is going to suffer.

Church leaders usually have a lot on their plate. It may feel overwhelming to add social media marketing to your to-do list. I want to encourage you again that this is the best time in history to be in ministry.

Social media levels out the playing field between small and large churches. It provides you with an amazing opportunity to reach so many people with the saving message of Christ. Understanding and applying these methods will have a great impact on your church and community.

The modern marketing revolution

"It is no longer enough to satisfy your customers. You must delight them." ~Philip Kotler

Imagine a marketing executive in a meeting 20 years ago saying, "Instead of doing advertising on billboards or radio or television, we're going to develop a device that people carry around with them. They'll look at this device all the time—when they're standing in line or going to the restroom or sitting at the dinner table or visiting with their family. Then we'll deliver our message to them through this device and get them addicted to it."

That idea surely would've been met with laughs and eye rolls 20 years ago. Back then the concept would be too far-fetched and sound too good to be true. Yet, that's right where we are now. We are living in a marketer's paradise. And even though there are negatives to our society's cell phone addiction, it can be used for good.

With the power of social media, you can deliver your message to your ideal market through their phone. You can invite people to visit your church right on the device that is always in their hands.

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