

The Secret to Effective Marketing for Ministries

The world of marketing can be daunting, especially if you are not sure where to start. This week, Patrick goes over the 3 secrets of effective marketing for ministries, the best way to fundraise, and more.

Introduction

Patrick: So here's kind of what I wanna talk about. The big picture version.

So I wanna start talking about attention, okay?

And then I wanna get into marketing in three parts, then I'm gonna tell you a tale about two ministries.

Next I'm gonna talk about the best way to fundraise. And then I think I'll finish it up on some thoughts on perspective on how long things take.



It All Starts With Attention

So let's start with attention. And it's the coin of the realm right now, attention, it's where it all starts.

And it does not matter if you're trying to sell a product, a service or capture donations for a ministry. You have to have the tension, eyeballs to do that.

And whether you're a ministry or a television show, or a musician trying to make money, raise funds, it all starts with attention.

Those that have the attention, hold all the cards, they have access to the greatest opportunities, it's not even close.

TWO TYPES OF ATTENTION: OWN VS. RENT

There's two types of attention, okay? There's the kind that you own, by which I mean, phone numbers, email addresses, mailing addresses.

Those are the ones that you own, that nobody can take away from you, and nobody can change the rules on you, you own that information, right?

Then there's the kind that you rent. These are your Facebook fans or your WhatsApp fans, or your YouTube subscribers.

And I say rent, because this attention can be taken away, it just about any time right? The social media platforms can change the rules on you.

HOW CAN YOU CAPTURE ATTENTION?

So let's talk about how you can capture attention, okay?

Attention can be captured in many ways: in-person events, press, newspaper, magazine coverage, from traffic to your website, email addresses, social media followers, YouTube subscribers, or content you put out there.

But ministries need to be always building both. Businesses need to be always building both, the attention that you rent, and the attention that you own.

You always wanna be capturing more of it, more email addresses, more social followers, more YouTube subscribers.

If you have that attention, you can literally do anything. Without it, you struggle to be heard at all.

And I know in the context of ministries, most are reliant on major donors, they barely have the website, they're not sending emails, they don't have any social media followers, they're not regularly storytelling in those channels.

And I think as I talk about attention, it's a huge shame, because with attention, if you're working on your marketing, if you've got a website, if you're publishing content to the social sphere, you're capturing email addresses, the ministry is in such a better place, and especially as it pertains to fundraising in your local communities, and not being so reliant on the major donors.

So despite the cultural differences, as it pertains to marketing, I would say the whole world right now, in today's day and age for the most part, has one of these, right?

Different variations of them, yes, but they have one of these.

And so, if you focus on your marketing and you think through your marketing, if you can figure out how to get your story about what your ministry does, and the impact that it's making, and the lives that it's changing, onto this, you're winning.

So that's attention, it's sort of a counterintuitive concept, but it really it's everything.



The 3 Secrets of Effective Marketing

And so let's pivot to marketing, okay? And being good at it. And I'll sum it up in three parts.

1. FOCUS ON THE RIGHT THINGS

Number one is the website, home base for all your content. It exists to tell your story and to capture email.

So you have to have a website. It has to be able to capture email, addresses, phone numbers also to a certain extent, and be a place where you can do the storytelling, okay?

That's step number one, the website.

Number two, the actual marketing itself. And this has two parts. If you want to be good at it: You need to focus all of your work on the highest ROI activities.

What do I mean by ROI? Return on investment. So we all have limited time, we all have limited treasure, limited budget, limited staff.

So you wanna be focusing on the marketing initiatives that deliver the best return on that time. And we can get into that.

We live in this crazy digital world, this crazy connected digital world. And there's always some new shiny object to chase, right? Like there's a new app, there's a new service.

This makes more sense if you're doing any marketing at all. But the larger point is, you just have to focus on what's working, and not chase shiny objects. We'll get into that in a second.

2. BE CONSISTENT WITH MARKETING

Number two, you have to be consistent. And ministries are terrible at this.

So, okay, let's say, you're focusing on the high leverage marketing activities that work best in the region that you are.

You have to also do so consistently. And you can't ever stop. You have to do a little bit of work, week-in, week-out, telling your story, feeding these channels,

sending emails, building your social followers, and no one ever does it. And it kills it.

It's more important in terms of marketing, to do so consistently with limited time, than it is to do it in bursts.

Meaning, one month you spent 20 hours on marketing, the next month you did nothing. And then the month after that, you did nothing. And then the month after that you spent 40 hours on marketing. You have to spend consistent time.

If you only have two hours a week, then do it two hours a week, every week for 52 weeks. So that's actually the secret to marketing, is focusing on the right things, and again, we'll get into that, and then two, doing it consistently throughout the year.

3. DITCH THE SELF-LIMITING BELIEFS

So, at this point it's like, okay, great, right? You're hearing this point of the presentation, you're like, okay, can we get into the hardcore marketing tactics?

I'd love to just talk about, tell me what to do on Facebook, tell me what to do on Instagram. Should I start a YouTube channel? What about WhatsApp? This social media sites is not big in my country, right?

And as much as I'd love to get into the tactical marketing, I think that the third concept, the third most important in terms of marketing, in terms of ministries is ministries have this tendency to think that, I'm reliant on major donors, I don't need to be marketing.

None of the people that would potentially give money to my ministry are located on the social media platforms, they're not checking websites out, so this would just be a huge waste of my time, right?

And I find these consistently to be sort of these self limiting beliefs, that prevent ministries from ever getting started, building out their websites, starting to blog, starting to post on the socials, starting to capture email addresses.

It's these self-limiting beliefs that get in the way, and they completely prevent any marketing from ever being done.

Beliefs like that, you don't have the bandwidth, you don't have the staff to get started. And if you did, if you just had a great gift for that you could get started, or beliefs like, why would I start marketing my ministry? My donors are not online.

Beliefs like, I work with, you know, sexually exploited victims, what stories could I possibly tell that would be appropriate for social media, right?

Beliefs like I'm doing God's work. He'll take care of bringing me the donors, the belief that marketing would likely be a waste of time. You know, nobody in my community has dollars to give.

The list goes on and on.

But what I see almost consistently is, you get those beliefs in your head and you say, okay, you know I don't need to have a website. I don't need to be storytelling. I don't need to work on my storytelling. I don't need to be posting anything to the socials. You never get started.

And if you never get started, you never get the ball rolling. You never get the momentum you need, and you never do it consistently, right?



Putting It into Context: A Story of Two Ministries

So let me, let me put that in context. Let me tell you a story about two ministries, okay?

Both started at the same time. Both relied on major donors. Those started say three years ago, right?

Ministry A never did any digital marketing at all. They had some major donors, so everything was pretty smooth. They focused on their operations.

Ministry B, okay, decided early on, to engage and invest in digital marketing. They had a website, they built their email list. They put out content on what they were doing, and told stories. They built up a Facebook fan page or WhatsApp group, a YouTube channel.

They stayed at their marketing consistently and they did what they could year after year. They focused on the high ROI activities, and they marketed consistently.

Then COVID hit. And major donors put everything on pause.

Ministry A was in a bad spot, right? They had no access to attention, either owned or rented, no website, no social sites. They had nothing. Their major donor was out.

Ministry B, on the other hand, they had an email list, they had social followers, they kept telling their story. They kept marketing throughout the pandemic, and their story resonated. It got shared, it got attention.

And some of the small donors, some small donors got passionate about the ministry, and they contacted a long donor, a larger donor. They got the funding they needed to get the lights on and the ministry growing.

So that story is real and happening right now, all over the missions world, and all over the business landscape.

If you were just assuming that things were always going to keep going and be fine with your major donors, and then COVID hit, you were in a bad spot.

If you were marketing that entire time, and it doesn't matter what level of sophistication you get started with, right?

Like you get started, you focus on the basics, and you start doing it, the next time another one of these pandemics comes around, you're not going to be high and dry, because you're going to have an attention, and you're going to have a list you can keep storytelling to, and potentially raise money from.

So that's what I would say, about a tale about two ministries.



What's the Best Way to Fundraise?

And, you know, what's the best way to fundraise? It's a trick question of sorts, but I think it'll be an interesting thought exercise.

The best way to fundraise is in-person, face to face, right? No one ever disputes that fact.

What is the next best way? It's digital, okay? It is actually digital. Lots of folks start doing their digital marketing, and they really miss on this piece.

Our job with digital marketing, with the website, with the storytelling, with the publishing on the socials, with the emails, is to take fundraising, face to face, person to person, and do it digitally as close as humanly possible.

The best way to fundraise is in person. The next best way is digital.

Our job with digital is to make it as close as possible to the human situation, the human and their analogy, right?

You know, the store analogy, let me give you a store analogy, and it'll have some western context. Cause that's my context. Then it will make sense.

Face-to-face, in-person fundraising, right? The best way to do it. Your digital website, which is open 24 hours a day. And you know, it works when you're asleep. It's constantly telling the story. You can fundraise like that way.

But what we really want to do, is we want the merger between the two, okay? And let's just say, I walk into a store, right? I walk into a store to go buy something. And I look at a couple of things on the shelf. I look at a couple of things in the shelf here.

If I walked into a store like that, okay, the person behind the counter would come up to me, and they would say, "Patrick, I saw you were looking at that. Can I help you? You want to take a look at this? You want to take a look at that? Okay, great."

So let's say in-person, the store analogy, and then your website. Everybody sets up the website, right? And it's just this passive billboard of sorts. It's there. You can go and put your email in the box, and that's all well and good. That's fantastic.

But what we really want to do is, we want to take that fundraising thing, and make it as close as possible to the offline.

So how does the store analogy compare?

With the advent of video, and especially all the different ways we can video chat: WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, depending on what's big in your country, the iPhone messenger here in the US is really easy.

You have an ability now, to be able to get into a video conversation, just like the Zoom call potentially, face to face, with just about any way, anywhere in the world, right?

So if you think that through and you understand how important face-to-face video communication is, and you start doing marketing on a regular basis, and a potential donor comes to your site, and wants to talk, you initiate a video chat, it can be incredibly, incredibly, incredibly powerful.

So I think that's just a good context piece to understand how amazing video is, and how quickly it's just completely revolutionizing everything, i.e., the Zoom call.



How Long Does It Take to See Results?

The last piece I want to talk about is the perspective of how long it takes.

And you know, whether we're talking about a business or a ministry, it's important to understand perspective.

And Steve Jobs here, who was famously was the CEO of Apple, you know, Apple Computer, the iPhone. And he said, it takes three to five years to build anything of value, okay? Three to five years to build anything of value in life. And he's totally right.

You know, if you're going to build your ministry, and you're like, you know what I know I need to get into digital marketing. It's really, really important. I realized that I realized it's going to take me some time.

If you don't have this perspective piece sorted in your mind that it might take three to five years to really start picking up steam, seven to nine to really, really get somewhere incredible. You're, you're in a bad spot.

THINK ABOUT THE 5 HOUR DRIVE, NOT THE 1.5 HOUR DRIVE

And, you know, the the analogy I give is, I like riding motorcycles. And there's this place five hours away. So five hours away from my house.

And I used to always drive down there, and go ride motorcycles before I had children, and then drive back in five hours, not too long of a drive, but a long drive.

On that drive, I would pass about two hours in, where my mother-in-law lives, okay? And when I was going five hours to go ride the motorcycles all the way down there, and I passed my mother-in-law's house, it was like, no big deal, right?

Because in my mind I was on a five-hour drive. I had lots to go. I had lots to go.

Well I'm not doing the five-hour drive anymore. But I'm still going out to see my mother-in-law. And I find that when I'm in the car, and I'm on the way, right, I start getting antsy, and anxious, and saying, are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet? When I'm only an hour into the drive.

And you sit there in your mind, and you're like, wait a minute, you used to drive five hours and go right past this house, and not worry about it in the slightest, because you had the five-hour drive in your mind.

Now, when I'm on my way there, I'm almost an hour and a half into the drive. And I'm like getting anxious, getting nervous, because in my mind, I'm thinking about an hour and a half drive, instead of the five hour drive.

And I think that's a powerful analogy on the perspective of how long things take, especially in the ministry context of how long it takes to build up.

So if you have that perspective piece on how long it's going to take you to build your ministry, and build a good following, digitally speaking, for your ministry, you're in a very, very good place.



Why Video Marketing is So Powerful

And, you know, again, I talked about live video, and I think, you know, this pandemic has certainly put some trends into place. And they're ones that I think, that are gonna stay there for a while.

And again, live video, absolutely exploding worldwide right now. And that was on the ascendancy before COVID hit. As soon as that hit, and people were shelter in place, like just exploded. And it's an, every facet imaginable, right?

Like the zoom call that we're all on today, all of the social platforms, Facebook live, YouTube live, Instagram live, Twitter live, LinkedIn live, even via the messaging platforms like WhatsApp.

You know, I have friends that work in the video department for Facebook, and for reference Facebook owns Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

That said during the height of the pandemic, video usage exploded so much that they were terrified that the entire Facebook website was going to go down, and those stats have held. So video is just massively on the ascendency.

And you know, if you are a ministry, and you're like you know, I don't have a writer on staff, and I don't understand how I'm going to publish to the socials and I don't have the video camera, and you start getting discouraged. There's phenomenal news here, right?

That's all you need. That's all you need.

And the pandemic hit. The expectation was like, when you say video, big scary thing, oh, I've got to have lights and a microphone, and hair and makeup and all the rest of that.

But the pandemic hit. Everyone was forced to work out of their houses. Now everyone's just broadcasting live TV shows out of their houses all the time.

No one cares about the hair, the makeup, lights, any of it. And so it's, it's just an amazing, amazing thing. So video massively on the ascendency.

If you start using it now, you start getting good at it now, you start posting it to your web, you start putting it on the socials, you're willing to talk to donors at any point in time via Zoom calls, via web chat, whatever it is, to explain the stories what's going on in your ministry, what you're seeing on the ground, phenomenal, phenomenal opportunities, phenomenal phenomenal trend to be aware of.