



The Stewardship Journal

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**From My Desk
to Your Inbox**



The Fourth C



**Communications
Team Overview**



**The Seven Common
Mistakes Churches Make**

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From My Desk to Your Inbox

Communication is a key component to a successful capital campaign. With that in mind, this week's issue of *The Stewardship Journal* continues to focus on capital campaign planning.

Mark Brooks, the Stewardship Coach, shares a post entitled ***The Fourth C*** where he establishes the importance of communicating a vision that drives your campaign. In the bonus section, ***Communications Team Overview***, you'll find a helpful one-page handout for your communication team to use while planning your campaign.

Finally, ***The Seven Common Mistakes Churches Make*** will help you avoid common mistakes and put you on the right path to a successful capital campaign!

Have you missed an issue in this series? Not a problem. You can find all past issues of *The Stewardship Journal* at stewardshipjournal.com or LouisianaBaptists.org/Stewardship.

Keep Looking Up,



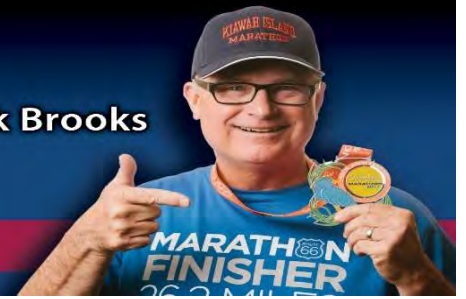
Dr. Steve How

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Mark Brooks



The Fourth C



“If you want your members to catch your vision, you will need to tell them that vision seven times, seven different ways.” That was the advice that my first capital campaign consultant gave me way back in the 20th century. With your members getting blasted with over 3,000 marketing messages daily, it’s even more true today. How can you get your vision heard above the roar of everything else? I will show you how in this Coach, entitled **The Fourth C**.

Let’s review a few things about vision. First, what do we mean by vision? Vision answers the question, “Where are you going?” I believe the vision flows from the pastor’s heart into the church’s leadership and then to the membership. To accomplish this, you must use what I call **The 3 Cs of Vision Casting** – When it comes to your vision:

1. **Make it clear** - Do your members clearly understand what you are attempting to do?
2. **Keep it concise** - Donors have two questions: does this make sense, and can you pull it off?
3. **Cast it compellingly** - The most important thing is to make your vision matter in the hearts of your members.

The 3 Cs of Vision depend upon The Fourth C—Communication. In nearly every feasibility study I did for a church leading up to a capital campaign, one of the key discoveries was members’ accusation that the church leadership failed to communicate properly. When I would share that with the staff, they would point out some sermon, newsletter, social media post, or whatever to prove they have been communicating. How could both be true? The seven times, seven different ways principle is, I think, the best answer.

Without looking it up, can you tell me what the second point of your sermon three months ago was? You can’t, can you? If you can’t remember that, how do you expect your members to remember the vision you cast six months before you launched a capital campaign? They won’t. Vision casting is like pouring water into a pot with holes.

Has the vision that you have cast to your members leaked out? As a pastor, once a year, I would preach a sermon about the vision God had given me for my church. I called it my state of the church message. I would lay out what was ahead for us in the next year, casting a vision that I thought was compelling and, most of all, God-sent. I would wonder in May why the church did not understand what we were to be about. I heard a pastor correctly nail it a few years back when he said, “Vision leaks!” My vision-casting sermon had probably leaked out the second they got to the cafeteria for Sunday dinner.

Vision casting cannot be one Sunday a year or even the Sunday of launching the campaign. Because vision leaks, we must repeatedly remind our members where we believe God has us going and how they can get on board. Vision, when it comes to stewardship, is the main driver of why people give. So, if your vision pot is leaking, you can be assured that any capital campaign will suffer as a result. So,

Communicate, communicate, communicate! Then, communicate the vision some more!



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Bonus Section

Communications Team Overview

The following is a page from my campaign planning sheet. Each church defines the Communications Team's makeup. For some, this is run by a staff member. For others, a layperson heads up the team. No matter the team's makeup, the following principles and tasks give you a broad overview of the tasks needed. I use this sheet as a discussion starter for how to communicate the vision of the campaign in engaging ways.

Mission Statement - The overall mission of the Communications Team is to help cast the vision of the capital campaign in a clear, concise, and compelling manner through printed materials, multimedia, and other creative tools. The goal is to connect each segment of the _____ family to the vision in such a way that their questions are answered, and they are ready to make a willing, wholehearted commitment to the campaign. The principle values to remember throughout this process are to:

- Share the vision of _____ and how the project links to fulfill that vision
- Tell the story of _____.
- Show the plans for the proposed project.
- Answer anticipated frequently asked questions
- Inspire members about the vision
- Encourage involvement in church and the campaign
- Challenge each one at _____ to make a commitment to support the vision

Campaign Deliverables—Every church is different; therefore, what you as a team decide upon for your deliverables will be different. Your team's goal is effective communication. This may or may not involve spending dollars. Every dollar spent, however, must be seen as an investment, not an expense. The goal is not to spend as much money as possible, thinking that the more spent, the more will be raised.

Again, our aim is to be effective with what is spent on printing. The standard should be the existing level of expectation of materials currently used at _____. We want the campaign materials to be a notch above that material. It must have a quality and clarity that will capture the donor's attention.

Some of the deliverables that you might consider are:

- Campaign Logo and theme
- One-page vision summary for leadership meetings
- High-Capacity Donor Brochure
- Congregational Campaign Brochure
- FAQ Sheets – usually used with the Brochure
- Videos
- Commitment Event Invitations
- Newsletters, bulletin inserts, social media posts, etc.
- Advance Gift Commitment Cards/Envelopes
- Celebration Commitment Cards/Envelopes

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The Seven Common Mistakes Churches Make

A few years ago, I was on a conference call with a church, thinking about starting a capital campaign. One of the leaders on the call asked me about common mistakes churches make regarding capital campaigns. I sat down and came up with seven mistakes that we found most common. Make sure you are not making these mistakes.

Not starting soon enough. This is mistake number one. Churches often underestimate the time required for a successful capital stewardship campaign. If given my choice, I would like at least six months from start to finish. Some campaigns take longer. A few can be done in a shorter time frame. The rule here is to start sooner rather than later. The sooner you start, the more options you have. When you start later in the game, you are more prone to hurrying through the process and thus making mistakes. These mistakes can lead to a loss of money or even worse. Start now to avoid these consequences!

Single-focused vs. Multi-focused. Preachers drive most campaigns. We tend to approach all aspects of planning like we do sermons. We never think about point number two until we have completed point number one. So, when we come to the campaign, we put it off until we think we have all the other pieces in place.

It's essential to maintain a balanced focus on three key areas: the project, financing, and fundraising. Each of these areas has its own timeline, and a smart church understands the need to manage all three simultaneously. Avoid the trap of sequential planning. Instead, concentrate on all three aspects at the same time to ensure a successful campaign. This balanced approach is the key to your campaign's success.

Premature launch. This might seem contradictory to my first point, but what I mean here is the public phase of the campaign. Too often, in our excitement, we share things about the project or campaign that are yet to be fully developed. Most mistakes in a campaign are made months before the campaign begins.

Church members have long memories, especially when it comes to things you've said in the past. Be cautious about what you communicate, as plans often change. Prematurely launching a campaign can divert attention from the main goals. Instead, wait for the right time when all your preparations are in place for a successful public launch.

The Lone Ranger mentality. Another way of stating this is Do It Yourself. Churches that go it alone raise far less than those with a partner. It is much harder than you realize. For one thing, no one trained you in seminary or Bible College in stewardship. Don't succumb to the tendency of many preachers to never ask for help. Going it alone will mean failure.

Going cheap. One reason so many attempt to do their own campaign is the fee of the stewardship firm. When you go cheap, you get cheap. Incidentally, if you go with the cheapest stewardship firm, you might find that you also get what you pay for. I know a church that decided to run its second campaign by itself and save \$50K. They raised one million dollars less than the first campaign. I call that poor stewardship.

Funding fantasies. We think we can raise our annual operating budget by three to four times. Really? Does Bill Gates go to your church? Significant gifts ALWAYS drive that kind of ratio. Don't believe the hype of my industry about pledge-to-budget ratios. Few companies tell you the truth. Honestly, due to this current economy, pledge-to-budget ratios for ALL campaigns of ALL stewardship firms are lower. Don't think you are any different from other churches. Funds can be raised, but you should be careful about unrealistic expectations.

A design that does not fit. Make sure what you are building not only fits who you are but also what you need. Does your builder understand your needs? A good builder will begin not by asking what you want but what you want to do with what you want. There is a huge difference. Buildings are simply boxes in which ministry takes place. Make sure your design fits your ministry focus.

A vision that does not inspire. Good vision trumps everything, even a bad economy! People do not give to brick-and-mortar. They give to vision. Make sure that your vision for the project inspires your donors to want to sacrifice to see it happen. If your vision doesn't inspire them, they will spend that money eating out at McDonald's, buying another iPhone upgrade, or hiding it under their mattress. It's a vision thing!

There you have it—seven of the most common mistakes churches make. Make sure you don't make these mistakes. Making these mistakes will not mean the project won't happen. However, if you make these mistakes, it might delay the process or cause you to raise significantly less than what you could have.