

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

How to Build a Digital Engagement Strategy - Episode 162

The New Front Door of the Church (Part 2)

The COVID-19 pandemic moved churches online—but that shift wasn't really our choice. While some churches are already returning to pre-pandemic attendance levels, most mid-size and larger churches are realizing that's still many months away. And reaching *new* people? How do you reach new guests when most people are staying home most of the time? The need for a digital strategy isn't going away anytime soon. In this episode, Tony and Amy share a practical framework—and real-world examples—for helping people take steps digitally in their faith journey.

Begin with the End in Mind

- Ultimately, churches want to help more and more people become fully devoted followers of Jesus. You want to help them move from where they are today to where God wants them to be.
- You could view “Spiritual Condition” on a continuum, like this:
1 Not Interested → 2 Spiritually Curious → 3 Believer → 4 Being Discipled → 5 Disciple Maker
- An effective digital engagement strategy will help people take steps in that faith journey from beginning to end.
- Most ministries in most churches are focused on steps 3 and 4. And churches on the declining side of the church life cycle are typically *only* focused on steps 3 and 4.
- A digital engagement strategy should help people in all seasons of their spiritual journey, but it's especially critical if we're going to engage people who are not interested or spiritually curious.

Key Components of Building a Digital Engagement Strategy

- **Clarify the engagement goal for each step along a person's spiritual journey.**
Again, begin with the end in mind: Before you build a strategy, you need to define the goal. As an example, the goal for someone who is *Not Interested* may be to simply introduce the church to these new folks. For someone on the opposite end of the continuum, a *Disciple Maker*, the engagement goal might be to build relationships with people outside the faith.

- **Determine your content strategy (primary message) for each step on the continuum.**
For someone who is *Not Interested*, as an example, our strong encouragement is that you build your content strategy around providing help and answers for living life, addressing the opportunities and challenges they are facing in their daily lives, like relationships, parenting, emotional/mental health, purpose, financial health, etc. To do so necessitates that before you build your content strategy, you clearly identify who you are trying to reach and what their needs are (opportunities and challenges).
- **Determine how you are going to deliver that content (the primary medium) for each step on the continuum.**
It's not just about creating the right content, it's also about engaging people where they are rather than where we want them to be. For people who are *Not Interested*, we want them to be in church. That's not where they are today. That means we have to provide this practical content on the platforms where they are living life and using the mediums that they are engaging. We need to speak their language in their environments. Think digital content rather than online services. Think shareable online rather than a requirement to show up in-person. Think Facebook, Instagram and YouTube rather than your sanctuary or a church classroom.

Having a digital strategy isn't the win. Helping become disciples of Jesus and then disciple makers is the win. The good news is that if you do the hard work of clarifying the big and small next steps for each step on the faith continuum, then all you have to do is measure the number of people taking those next steps. That becomes your new dashboard to monitor ministry health.

Next Steps

Sign up for [Unstuck Leadership Coaching](#).

We've had a lot of pastors reach out asking, "Am I the right leader to take us into the future?" The leadership you were prepared for may not be the leadership your church needs going forward, but God gave you the role you have for a time like this. And you're not alone.

For the last 10 years, we've been providing pastors with an ally—coaching them as they lead churches towards a new vision for the future, with the goal of continually reaching new people and helping them take next steps towards Christ. We want to walk with you and be an ally in your corner. We can help you change the way you lead as you lead change. [Learn how to get started](#).

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode162.