

Grace Cathey

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### VISIT TO AN ADVERTISING FIRM

Advertising can come in many shapes, forms and sizes. Along with that, your target audience can differ, based on what you are advertising, or who you are advertising for. I attend New Vision Baptist Church, and have for years. Over the course of these years, I have seen their advertising to the churchgoers evolve, and shift as needed. One thing I have noticed that stays consistent, however, is their branding. According to our textbook, branding is “a marketing function that identifies products and their source and differentiates them from all other products” (Arens and Weigold 11). New Vision does an excellent job at making sure all graphics their audience sees match their brand, no matter what ministry it is going to. They stick to the same font, and same “New Vision colors” to ensure uniformity. I had a chance to speak with Jenna Greenup, Director of Communications for New Vision Baptist Church, and ask her more on what sort of specific advertising this unique operation does.

First, I asked her if New Vision advertised and, whether they did or did not, what their “WHY” was behind it (Something you should know from the start: New Vision is big on always asking what the “WHY” is behind everything they do. It’s really helpful, actually!). Greenup

said that for the majority of what they do, New Vision strategizes and targets core members first. When they do advertising, the unpaid ads are internal. These advertisements are meant to be seen by New Vision members, the core congregations and first time guests. They hope that they can move people from a place of worship to connection through this. New Vision has a term they use called “Next Steps,” which means getting involved in activities and things at church, such as serving, discipleship, mission trips and more. How does advertising fit into this?

In order to move people into a place of worship, New Vision advertises to the community, mainly through digital (social) media. They use paid formats of advertising by wisely investing their advertising money into paid, or “pay to boost,” advertisements on social media apps. “Facebook and Instagram are really good at targeting specific audiences, locations and interests,” Greenup said. This paid form of advertising on social media then allows the church to invest in reaching people where they are at (online), and it helps the team spend fewer advertising dollars in the process. The New Vision Communications Team then builds their graphics and videos around the audience they are targeting, and make their advertisements mainly graphic and video based.

Social media has proven to be a powerful way for the church to get their messages across, and to reach people in the surrounding communities. Advertisements for unique events like Night of Healing and Outdoor Baptism Night spread across Instagram and Facebook to ensure their audience, and their community, were made aware of these events. New Vision also collaborated with The Experience Church and First Baptist Church Murfreesboro in September for an Outdoor Worship Night at The Fountains at Gateway, right here in Murfreesboro. With

this, all three churches advertised the same content, which allowed more people to remember the event before it happened.

“New Vision’s core demographic is ages 25-40, and young families. These people are primarily on socials, and are drawn to social media advertisements more than paper or radio ads,” said Greenup. New Vision saves most of their papered advertisements for bigger church events, such as Christmas and Easter. During those times of year, the team will work with a local marketing firm to send out targeted postcards to a mailing list that extends a certain radius from both of their church campus locations to, again, “meet people where they are.”

I asked Greenup if New Vision did mainly advertising mainly in the church, to the community or a mix of both. She told me it depended on the target they were trying to reach. About 85-90% of the media they created was “internal,” meaning it was meant to be placed on the scrolling slides on the televisions in the building, website or anything of the same degree. However, the extra 10-15% of that was meant for social media, which would reach the community. This is mainly reserved for when they are trying to promote a certain event. “This is really because we are supporting strategy,” Greenup said. “If we spent 95% of our energy pulling people in, then we are not doing our jobs as believers in discipling people. So, we spend the majority of our energy discipling people that are already at or attending New Vision.”

Finally, I asked Greenup what the most important tactics were for advertising to specific demographics, in her opinion. She told me that knowing your target audience, across the board, is very important. Along with that, know the “WHY?” behind everything you do: WHY are you

promoting this event, WHY are you helping create content to promote small groups, and so on.

This will help to build marketing elements for the ministries you are working with, and the audiences you are targeting. You want to add purpose and value to the lives of the people you are targeting with all you do.