

6 WAYS

TO SPICE UP YOUR CHURCH'S SERVICE HOSTING

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Why do so many church leaders look down on the announcement portion of their weekend services?

Why is it that this part of what we do seems to be maligned by preachers and worship leaders alike?

The humble announcement spot is critically important to every church service. Service hosting is one of the most important tasks that occur in every service, whether executed in-person or online.

This portion of what you do is incredibly important because it is the connection that ultimately **drives people to take action and get involved in your church.** The musical worship moments are about transcendence and the teaching provides something to chew on and transformative content. Service hosting is the portion of your weekend service that must move people to action.

Many church leaders **talk about wanting to increase church engagement but ignore the opportunity** in every service to help people take their next steps. We need to be thinking carefully about how we're leveraging the announcement portion of our weekend services.

Think of service hosting as the rubber-meets-the-road application to driving more engagement, which ultimately leads to people wanting to increase their involvement in your church. Do not relegate this opportunity to the same boring and repetitive phrases that have been used in the past. To ensure that your service hosting is done well, think about how you structure your announcements. To help you, we've pulled together half a dozen different ways to spice up your service hosting! We want to give you applicable ideas that you can put into action right away.

Over the last two-plus decades, I've served in my church as a service host in many contexts. Because I am not a primary preacher, I have had time to think extensively about how we can better present our announcement slot. I have certainly made mistakes. This one time, I was supposed to come up and talk about the announcements after the third worship song. Well, I lost track backstage and walked on after the second song, literally cutting out a third of what the worship team had prepared for that service. **Doh! Not the kind of thing you want to replicate.** But I have also witnessed how when service hosting is done well, it moves people to action. Excellent service hosting can move people from apathy to connection with the church in a profound way. I want to help you add variety to what you do in service hosting.

The human mind is a pattern recognition machine. The minds of the people who you're communicating with continuously try to match the information received with the information that is already stored in their brains. If you repeat yourself or continuously use the same strategy, **the human mind will power down and ignore you.** The brain will conserve energy if it perceives that its receiving information already acquired before. This is particularly dangerous in this season of doing most things online. We constantly hear people asking us to “click the subscribe button and the little bell to get notifications” or to “like, comment, and share”. If these patterns of language are not done well, people tune out.

It's a balance between doing things that fit within the frame of expectation but then breaking that frame to capture the attention of the people you're communicating with. We want to do something familiar enough to draw people in and then put a twist on it to ignite their curiosity. So here are six ways to break your patterns and monotony of normal service hosting, and to add some spice to your team's communication process.

ADD A CO-HOST

Adding a second person (or maybe a third if you're really ambitious!) to host your weekend services can add so much variety to your weekend services.

The extra person will give the primary host someone to bounce ideas off as they speak to the congregation. The co-hosts must plan what they're going to talking about. You'd be amazed at how planning ahead elevates your ability to engage and captivate an audience.

A good co-host gives the primary host someone they can respond to and interact with. The respondent provides an emotional context for the announcement being made. **They can reflect the response or reaction that you hope people listening will have when receiving the information.**

Think about people who will make interesting pairs and they will likely make a good co-host team. You could get your kid's ministry leader to team up with the student ministry leader. There's natural tension there that might be fun to work out in front of your community. Or maybe there are couples in your church who are naturally witty and fun as they engage with each other. What about multiple generations? Pair a young person with a 70-year-old, they might create a fun dynamic for your Sunday morning experience!

TELL A STORY

One of the most powerful ways to communicate with people is to frame whatever information we're attempting to convey in the form of a story.

Even a simple story framework of beginning, middle, and end, can add spice to your service hosting. **Taking people on a journey can be a powerful way of adding variety to hosting the service.**

Maybe you're asking people to volunteer for an upcoming event at your church. Rather than just listing the details and when you need them to show up, tell the story behind the event. Try to recast the announcement in a [hero's journey framework](#), where the people who are volunteering become the hero. Take time to think about what the narrative arc is and attempt to move people into action by telling a story.

Perhaps you're wanting to celebrate the generosity of your church through a special season? Resist the temptation to just use charts and stats. Consider the human impact that your church's giving has made. Tease out the story and then connect the dots to explain how their giving made a difference in someone's life!

REDUCE THE CONTENT

One of the most powerful ways to add more spice to your weekend service hosting is to simply talk about fewer things.

Too many churches that I've visited online, and in-person, seem to have a laundry list of things they want to talk about during the announcement slot. They try to cram three or four lengthy announcements into a short timeframe.

What if we cut the list down?

Shortening the list to only one or two topics will give the host/s and your audience the chance to breathe and slow down. It will also allow the host to put into action some of the other points suggested here. In fact, one of the greatest hacks for creating a better service hosting experience is to reduce the total number of items that people are talking about. **Fight it out with your leadership team to see who gets one of 50 spots to announce things that are coming up at your church.** Thinking through what is important enough to garner the entire church's attention is a critically important process for achieving a more effective service hosting experience.

Narrow the focus for more impact. **The less that your hosts have to talk about during any given weekend service the more attention they will give to it and the better they will do.** This is the high leverage opportunity for most churches that are looking to add spice to their weekend service hosting.

Do you need helping to say “no” when people ask you for some time during the announcement time? This can be difficult to do so we've included [an entire chapter in a free e-book on announcements that I'd invite you to download](#). It is possible to cut down what you talk about during announcements while at the same time ensuring all the departments at your church feel like they are “enough air time” to promote what they are passionate about.

VIDEO ANNOUNCEMENTS ADD PUNCH & PROVIDE CLARITY

As so many churches shifted to online communications in the past year, a lesson that has been swiftly learned is that taking time to shoot an announcement video on location is far more effective than having to listen to a talking head on stage or in front of a bullet-pointed screen.

A thoughtful leveraging of video announcements can ultimately move more people to action because you're able to communicate with so much more than just the spoken word.

[65% of the people attending your church are visual learners](#) and showing them an image or video will help them engage with what you're talking about.

Taking time to show, not tell, how you're hoping people will get involved is a powerful way to add variety and spice to your weekend service hosting.

INVOLVED NEXT-GEN LEADERS

Who is the youngest person you've had to host your weekend service announcements? What if you consistently chose someone younger in this coming year?

All churches need to find ways to pass ministry on to the next generation. Finding ways to create platform time for next-generation leaders will implicitly give a call to action to younger leaders and will engage them more effectively. **In fact, by platforming younger leaders, you will be communicating value in the next generation. This message will trickle down and impact how these leaders engage in your church.**

Having a traditional person pair with someone from your student or children's ministry will be a great start to drawing in younger hosts. Please don't ghettoize these leaders into only speaking to young people. Allow them to call the entire church to action on whatever topics are important in your church.

PROPS FOR THE WIN

Giving your service hosts something intriguing to hold onto while they speak is an engaging way to capture your audience's attention and imagination.

Having something messy, potentially dangerous, or funny will draw people in. **The human mind is naturally curious, and when you show people something different from what they normally see in a church context, they are more likely to remember the announcement.**

When you think about props to use ask yourself, "What is something that has never been seen in a weekend service?" Whatever you think of, use it as a prop! Years ago, we were attempting to get volunteer drivers for one of our campus launches. We drove a small car right on top of the stage during the hosting time and I hosted from inside the car. Talk about a memorable way to capture people's attention! Finding something funny, different, odd, or obscure for folks to hold onto will capture their imagination and help them to see more clearly what it is that you're trying to communicate.

LOOKING FOR MORE HELP WITH YOUR SERVICE HOSTING

OR ANNOUNCEMENT TIME AT YOUR CHURCH?

These five minutes in your church service are an incredibly important piece of the puzzle for how you drive more engagement at your church. Communicating clearly and compellingly must be a high priority for everyone who is in the service hosting spot. Giving these people training is essential if you're hoping to improve your weekend service hosting.

We've developed an e-book on announcements that we'd love to give you for free: "[Effective Announcements: Leverage 5 Minutes in Every Church Service to Move People to Action](#)". This ebook covers a wide variety of topics around how to improve your weekend announcement time and could be a great training tool for you to give to those who are performing this part of your service. This e-book includes:

- Common Pains of Giving Announcements!
- Why are People Not Listening to Your Announcements?
- The Elements of Effective Church Announcements
- The Elements of Effective Offering Talks
- Practical Help with Removing Filler Words Like "Um" and "Uh"
- Ideas to give to leaders when you have to say "no" to their announcement.

[Click here to download the announcements e-book.](#)