

Centralizing Communication Strategy in a Wild West Organization

Organization

Cokesbury United
Methodist Church

Location

Knoxville, TN

Industry

Church, Religious,
Non-Profit

Website

cokesbury.tv

■ What was the challenge for Cokesbury?

We have a great history of serving our community with hope and consistently intercepting needs around us in unconventional ways. As culture changed, we started experiencing a plateau of growth that limited the reach of our services.

Communication was one of three vital initiatives we had to tackle to turn things back in the right direction. It was bigger than marketing and we were stalled on how to move that forward.

Everyone wanted to see great things at Cokesbury but there was no real communication roadmap. We felt the pain of that disconnect on a regular basis.

■ Was the root issue found in mixed messaging or lack of unity?

In spirit, we were working together. In method, we were operating as lone rangers in the wild west. Every person was doing their individual best, taking the reins, and making things happen themselves. Of course, this only compounds the problem. In the end, our message got lost in all the side efforts to move it forward.

We struggled to find ways to connect all the things we do in a way that was meaningful to our community.

■ How did you get to the root problem?

We needed a clear message and method that was simple to gather around. How we structured these internal methods for our own people was just as important as the external message itself.

In a one-day workshop, Kem and Beth helped us align our message and methods with clear language and purpose. It was the objective footing we needed to find our balance again. **By the end of the day, we had crafted shorthand tools we could defer to when things got fuzzy and apply real-time to make good decisions.**

We needed these tools for a reason and we put them to work immediately. We made the right internal hire for a key position, we refreshed our staff values for an all-staff launch, we prioritized our communication channels, and organized an implementation plan.

■ What's the biggest difference now?

- **Our people are learning to trust us to get the right information to them at the right time.** Clear and reliable methods help our leaders, members, and guests trust there's intentionality and care from being invited to becoming part of our community.
- **We now have a weekly content strategy that provides a way to follow through instead of fizzling out.** Our leaders place more value in the unique purpose of our church than in their own way of getting things done. That creates the operational unity to actually move things forward.
- **Our engagement is higher, and not just with an external audience, but with our own internal participation as well.** I think that's an indication of improved internal health when people trust enough to come join you. That's a growth strategy that actually works.

Good tools make work manageable and less exhausting. And, that's what we have now.

Anna Lee, Executive Pastor
Ashley Cross, Director of Communications



If you're ready for an assist with some of your organizational, brand, and communications problems, let's talk.

Our team sets aside free blocks of 30 minute calls each week to listen and share some next step ideas "on the house."

[Schedule a Call](#)