

# Killing Your Personal Agenda For Communications, Design, and Web

JOSHUA BLANKENSHIP & SUZANNE SWIFT

## Who We Are and What We Do

A. Central Operations Team, staffing and structure, how do we support ministries?

B. Communications Director, role and responsibility, what does daily look like? communicate, support ministries of the church

C. Design Director, role and responsibility, what does daily look like? print collateral, signage, web design, processes; interior design. Never a normal day.

## How We View What We Do

A. personal sanctification process

B. Biblical definitions of elders (1 Tim 3:2-7) and deacons (1 Tim 3:8-13), how most of us in comm/design/web roles are technically biblical deacons (not an office, simply translated "servants").

HERE TO SERVE. not be a great designer or force personal taste on church/leaders. that's not always pleasing to the flesh.

C. Based on that, having a personal agenda ("our website should be hip and cool!", "my design ideas are better than my pastor's ideas!") doesn't fit our calling  
personal agenda NOT CONDUCIVE to being on church staff. we are supporters of those in ministry, make their job easier. this is OUR ministry. get to see ministry happening in all the other places, free them up so they don't have to worry a/b communication/design details, take burdens off of them. Give ministries opportunity to WIN.

D. Our job is to serve people. If we don't care about people, being in a comm/design/web role is the worst possible place for us-we are what is wrong with our staff culture, not everyone else. Seek God to change your heart, or to help you find your place elsewhere.

This is not the place to look for praise or make a name for yourself. If that's your reason for doing what you do, you'll be frustrated. If you bring your agenda to the table, not what you're leadership is telling you, you're not working with the right heart.

## How We Fit Into the Church

A. need to know the people on staff, relational equity goes a long way in making communication b/t ministries smooth

B. We provide the frameworks and foundations for ministry staff to prepare God's people for acts of service. We get to prepare the preparers.

Be excellent, but realize that sometimes others' opinions trump yours. You are here to serve. It's not your job to convince your pastor or children's minister that their idea sucks and yours is better. This is not a gig, not just a paycheck. If you have difficulty submitting to the authority over you, pray about God changing your heart. Or go find a job elsewhere. If you have difficulty submitting to ANY authority, you're in SIN. As you submit, you are building relational equity. And your pastor / children's minister is

going to trust you more. TRUST is so important. The leadership will see your servant's heart and trust you with bigger projects. Not to say you don't occasionally push back, b/c it's your job to be the expert. But realize that ultimately it's the leadership's decision to decide the direction of the church. That's not on you, it's on them. It's pretty hard to push back on people whom you don't know; why would they trust you? Build relationships with your fellow staff-members!

C. We are the behind-the-scenes front lines. When we do our jobs well, we are completely invisible. If you covet praise and attention, go elsewhere.

## **How We Function Under Authority**

A. We are to serve our leadership and to help them fulfill their roles. ("Without grumbling or questioning" Phil. 2:14) If you can't submit to the authority at your church, you should go find different leadership. If you can't submit to authority at all, you are in sin and you should pray for God to humble your prideful heart. Everyone on Earth is under authority, and it is one of the best possible things for our sanctification as believers. Learn to trust God, through the authority He's placed over you.

B. We are to do all things well, as unto God (Col 3:23-24). We should push for what is best for our church in the area where we have responsibility/authority/influence. If there's a bad idea, speak up. There is a way to do that humbly, as a servant. But being antagonistic with your staff, being a diva or whining like a little bitch is not it.

C. If your leadership wants to move forward with an idea you disagree with, move forward in unity and eagerness, in submission and joy, with the hope that 1) you are wrong, 2) God changes it, or 3) He turns it around for good.

## **What We Aren't Here to Do**

A. Build a portfolio

B. Make a name for yourself (Jer 45:5)

C. Get the praise and attention of others

D. Your own pride desires those things, and they are toxic to a staff culture and to your own spiritual maturity. If you want those things, go get them in the marketplace, on your own terms. Don't try to leverage the Church for your own benefit. Jesus does not like it when you whore out His bride for your own ends.

## **Q & A**

HOW FAR IN ADVANCE TO YOU KNOW A SERIES IS COMING UP?

4-6 weeks, that can change. There's no set process, though.

IS THERE A SYSTEM FOR HOW YOU TAKE A SERIES FROM IDEA, TO LOGO, TO SERIES IDENTITY?

Shane Duffey holds a creativity meeting where they go through Perry's sermon notes, someone from our team is always in that meeting. Usual. 3-4 weeks out. Kind of a big brainstorming session.

WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD YOU'VE FOUND FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION?

Email is easy, but there's a lot to be said for phone or face-to-face communication. Email THEN FOLLOW UP FACE-TO-FACE, or talk face-to-face and then follow up w/ an email. Over-communicate. You are building relationships, it's all a part of the process. Again, why does another staff-member want to listen to your enforcing design standards if they don't KNOW you?

DO YOU HANDLE DESIGN COMM FOR ALL NS CAMPUSES?

YES. Bulletins are shipped to each campus, but that may change to campus specific. Not sure. But all that stuff goes through our team.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE DIFFERENT MINISTRIES' DESIGN REQUESTS?

Design request forms. Then 2-week turn around process.

If people just want to send out an email, make sure each campus says WHERE, since we have 4 campuses. It may seem clear to a given campus, but it's not clear to everyone at NewSpring church.

We benefit greatly from the fact that NS Church doesn't DO a lot. We don't have tons of events. It makes it MUCH easier on our team to communicate things. We want people to come on Sundays and get involved in their next step, but it's pretty simple.

WHAT IF A COMM TEAM CAN ONLY MEET 1 OR 2 TIMES FOR A GIVEN SERIES, AND THEN THE PASTOR SAYS 'THIS IS ALL WRONG'?

Bring your pastor into those creative/communication meetings. Your pastor needs to buy into what you do. Otherwise you're going to hit a brick wall.

Get as much info about pastor's / people's expectations up front. Your personal preference is not going to win against your leader's.

You need to have a direct tie to the speaker so that what you create really does SUPPORT the message.

Over-communicate during the process of the speaker creating the message, b/c his direction may change.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY/EVENT-SPECIFIC ITEMS? VIDEO, WEB? HOW DO YOU GET THE WORD OUT TO GET SO MANY VOLUNTEERS HERE FOR AN EVENT LIKE UNLEASH?

Our volunteers are a bit crazy and already have a framework through which to find out about events. Really that originates through email, Twitter, Facebook. For UNLEASH we haven't done any sort of payed advertising / marketing. Perry twittered and you showed up.

Announcements in the services are usu communicated through video on the screens. We don't put announcements in the bulletins that are handed out, b/c no one reads those.

WHAT'S IN THE BULLETIN?

Notes, my info section (name, address, email), offering envelope with postage payed in case you forgot to bring it to church, prayer request form.

We used to do specific sermon outlines, but have moved away from that. Might come back.

DESIGN DIRECTION OR PIECE THAT WAS REALLY EFFECTIVE, WHY?

We help people bring their ideas to life. KidSpring bookmark idea a/b questions kids have, we applied brand standards to it, turned it into a print piece, and that will be handed out to kids so they can memorize scripture be ministered to. If KidSpring felt like they had to do that themselves, it wouldn't have been good or would never have

gotten done. Ministries come to us w/ an idea, we bring it to life.

DOES EACH MINISTRY HAVE A BUDGET W/ YOU GUYS?

The church has a budget for design.

GATHERING CONTACT INFO FROM NEW PEOPLE, HOW? WHO KEEPS UP WITH IT?

Our team does not do that. We use Fellowship One right now, but not much longer. It is plugged into F1 by the Care team, and then disseminated to whom it needs to go.

HOW HAVE Y'ALL CREATED A TWITTER CULTURE HERE AT NS?

Lots of people in Anderson don't know what Twitter is, so there's no secret plan. It happened organically. And we try to provide good, relevant content. Perry decided he wanted to start blogging & twittering, people started following.

WHAT SOFTWARE TO USE FOR A CHURCH STARTUP?

joshua.blankenship@newspring.cc Email him.

CENTRAL OPS?

IT, print, web, occasionally interior design, communications. Stage design is on another team. People come to us for advice too.

PASTOR, DESIGNER, CREATIVE, ALL IN ONE. HOW DO I DEVELOP A TEAM?

You shouldn't be spending your time on anything other than being a pastor. You're also preventing someone else from filling that role. You have to be willing to have things suck for a while while you raise a team. Joshua was a terrible designer for a year and a half. But they took a chance on him and let him learn. You've got to let people start where they are. You're not going to have a high level of design, necessarily, from the get-go. Joshua was developed over time. Find people who WANT to serve, and take a chance on them. Also, recommend finding a designer who can write.

DO YOU HAVE ENTRY LEVEL DESIGN WORK FOR PEOPLE TO START WITH?

Find people you LIKE, and they can learn, you can develop them. Find people who have passion to learn and passion for design, and they'll grow.

ARE MOST OF THE PEOP ON STAFF PEOPLE WHO ALREADY WENT TO NS?

Yes. Some were brought in b/c of a specific skill-set, but most were already here serving. We identified that they had a heart to serve, and they got hired.

Pray about if you're supposed to put a job posting online, and be obedient to what God tells you to do.

We're about 50/50 on outside hires, if they're successful. It's easier to bring someone up through your organization.

WHO STEPPED INTO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IS / IS NOT YOUR ROLE, THAT YOU ARE HERE TO SERVE?

No one on this staff ever told Joshua that. That was God's revelation and him becoming a mature believer. "I can't act like I know what I'm doing b/c I don't. I get the PRIVILEGE of serving here, and if I can't do it joyfully, I'm in sin." Scripture, time.

PERRY DECIDING TO PULL BACK FROM PERSONAL BLOGGING TO FOCUS ON CHURCH BLOGGING, STRATEGIC DECISION?

No. Perry just decided.

WHERE DO YOU PRINT THINGS?

Local vendors, and print place online. We don't print things in house. "Black market graphics" are when people print stuff on copy machines.

If we can replace a print piece w/ a sign, we do it. People don't keep up with sheets of paper you give them.

#### POST-MORTUM AFTER A SERIES?

Band and production teams do, we don't. Conversations happen, but no specific meeting happens to discuss if something hit the mark or not.

#### HAS NS DEVELOPED RESOURCES FOR OTHER MINISTRIES?

We're trying to find a system to help more churches. We have lots of phone calls and random consulting, but we don't have margin to DO work outside of what we do. Go to [newspring.cc/resources](http://newspring.cc/resources) to download all our print files, web graphics, etc.

#### WEBSITE FOR NEW CHURCH?

Clover has some good solutions for startups. Raise up a volunteer. Have realistic expectations.

#### WHAT'S THE ROLE OF OUTSIDE COMPANIES IN NS DESIGN?

We rarely outsource. Ken's video team outsources occasionally b/c they have one less team member than they need. We outsourced some of our web dev on the new site, but only b/c we REALLY needed it. We only outsource when it hurts.

Have realistic expectations and build relationships. Using vendors can be a ministry opportunity, but they are a vendor and are getting payed, and you are DOING ministry. There's a difference b/t perfection and excellence. A vendor delivering a piece that doesn't look like the file you gave them is wrong. Care for people's hearts.

#### DO YOU DO MAILERS FOR SERIES?

RARELY. 2 in the last 5 years?

We did it more when starting out, but it's EXPENSIVE for the return you actually get. Prioritize!

#### HOW IMPORTANT IS NS WEBSITE IN COMMUNICATION?

VERY. Mission of our website = get people into the doors of a NS church. Our site has to do double duty: front page is for newbies, rest of the site is for attenders.

#### HOW DID YOU GET GOOD AT DESIGN? HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT?

DO A LOT OF DESIGN. Joshua had Corel Draw and a white board. Malcolm Gladwell: 10,000 hours at something makes you good at it. No matter what you're doing. Joshua had a desire to become good. He pursued experts in the field. Emails, IM conversations, building relationship.

#### BLACK MARKET GRAPHICS, HOW DO YOU MANAGE THEM?

Balance being a leader and a servant. Relationship with others, you HAVE to have it. No relationship means TENSION. People submit design requests, and our answer is going to be YES. Our job is to serve, so that's what we're going to do. We'll do everything to make a request happen, but there are costs. People need to know the cost. Empower others by teaching them, allow them to learn the process.

#### HOW MANY PEOPLE VISIT NS WEBSITE EACH MONTH?

[newspring.cc/annualreport](http://newspring.cc/annualreport) will tell you!

#### HOW IMPORTANT IS FOR A CHURCH TO HAVE A WEBSITE?

SO IMPORTANT! It's an opportunity for someone to visit your church on their own turf, time, etc. to learn about you before they ever meet you. This is people's first impression of your church. If you're just starting out, you don't have to have a gigantic website; just make it easy for people to find you and find out about you.

WHAT QUESTION ARE YOU MOST WRESTLING WITH RIGHT NOW?

Suzanne: Being a servant leader.

Joshua: As a servant and a leader in this church, what am I replicating in and imparting to those around me?