

4 Ways Data Can Guide Your Ministry



Introduction

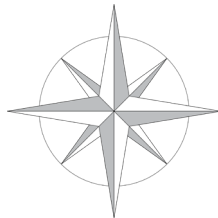
In Matthew 18, Jesus tells us the parable of the shepherd and lost sheep. In the parable, the shepherd leaves his 99 sheep to find the one that is lost. This parable teaches us that Christ cares for individuals and pursues them lovingly.

As the hands and feet of Christ, we have the same mandate today: to know our flock and pursue them with care, love, and understanding. God has given us many tools to accomplish this task, and, among them, data is paramount.

People desire to be known and understood. Data and God-given wisdom provide church leaders with insight into what individuals value, how they behave, and what drives them to deepen their relationship with Christ.

4 Ways Data Can Guide Your Ministry

Andrew Triplett
TouchPoint Software





LOVE GOD - LOVE PEOPLE - MAKE DISCIPLES

1 Measure Progress Toward Your Mission, Vision, and Values

Many sermons have been preached on Habakkuk 2:2 and the importance of putting your vision to paper. Most churches follow this wisdom and create a vision or values statement, print it out, post it on their office walls, and then occasionally glance at it in quarterly meetings. But in order to have meaningful values, it is important to measure progress against them. We have all heard Peter Drucker's famous quote that "what gets measured gets done." This is true for business and church alike.

If your church values, for example, "worshipping God intimately," then a way to measure that would be to track attendance at your worship services. If you value prayer, you can measure sign-ups and attendance at your prayer gatherings. If you value connection, you can measure participation in small groups.

Your ChMS should allow both staff and lay leaders to track attendance through either kiosks, sign in sheets, headcounts, or mobile apps. When tracked consistently, these measurements allow you to better understand how your activities are aligning with your vision and values.

In my life, I have found that tracking metrics helps me remain accountable to the goals I am trying to achieve. It's rarely "fun," and sometimes even painful, but it is always rewarding because it helps provide the discipline that may be hard to find on a given day.

Attendance tracking not only allows you to measure your church's performance against your values, but also allows you to find the people who are disengaging before it is too late. TouchPoint ChMS allows you to define someone as connected, however your church defines that; if they have attended two times in the last month and given once in the last month they would receive a "connected" badge on their people record. The badge is updated automatically based on their attendance and giving history with no extra work for your staff. You can then have reports emailed to your small group leaders when their participants have missed 2 weeks in a row, or generate other reports to track people who were formerly "connected" but are no longer.

TIPS FOR MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD YOUR MISSION:

- » Having a "vision frame" helps you know what is most important for recognizing if your ministry as successful.

- » Based on your vision, what kind of behavior, engagement, or interaction will be the evidence that people are living within those values?

Some questions to ask might include:

- How involved are people in small groups in your church?
- What percentage of the congregation is actively serving/volunteering on a weekly/monthly basis?
- How often are your lay leaders checking in on the people they are discipling?
- Are any classes declining?

» TouchPoint offers 10 different methods for recording attendance. Whether you prefer Check-In, Tickets, Roll Sheets, or using your Mobile App, we've got you covered. And what good is recording the attendance if you're not using it to guide ministry decisions? TouchPoint also offers a multitude of attendance reports, graphs, and charts to find out who's attending...and perhaps more importantly, who's been missing.



2 Create More Relevant Programs for People in the Pews

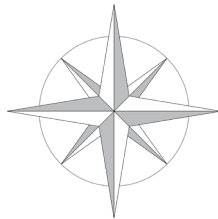
People get caught up in their particular season of life, which may not be the same as the season their pew neighbor is in. These individual experiences bring varied viewpoints, which tends to overpower the shared mission of the congregation. How do we make sure the congregation as a whole feels seen and supported? We use the life-stage data provided by our Church Management Software to break through these bubbles so we can minister to each group appropriately. Simply put: data allows church leaders to break through biases and quantify the decision making process by enhancing the discipleship process.

Knowing more about your congregation at an individual level allows you to create classes or programs to help them in each stage of life.

If your church is seeing an uptick in the number of unemployed members, you can offer support groups with classes on building resumes and mock interviews. If you have a large number of young families in your congregation, you can use that data to offer childcare for date nights. If you notice that your contributions are not where they should be, you can offer Financial Peace courses to help your congregation better manage their money.

TIPS FOR REVEALING THE MOST RELEVANT PROGRAMS AT YOUR CHURCH

- » Use the data you have about your church members' behavior to tell you what a typical “successful” discipleship journey looks like.
- » Once you analyze the numbers, it may surprise you to find that a certain class or ministry is accounting for a large number of people starting down the path of membership and deeper involvement.
- » Having a church management system in place that tracks individuals' progress from new visitor all the way to disciple-maker will help you get an accurate picture of what that journey generally looks like. Then you can use the power of that knowledge to properly resource the people and ministries that are driving the most growth.
- » TouchPoint offers a Small Group Finder, a tool that will allow you to present groups, classes, serving opportunities, etc. to your church-goers. They may filter for the available options (even search on a map, if you have off-campus events!), sign up, and even contact the group leader from right there!





3 Keep People Engaged Between Sundays

Relationships are key to the life of a healthy church. New people come through the doors and others leave through those same doors. Data can help you proactively re-engage the members of the congregation and communicate with them before they leave permanently. Your ChMS should not only allow you to find people who are connected or not connected, but should also support granular communication, allowing you to target specific groups of people with information that is more relevant to them. Many systems offer built-in email and SMS capabilities.

Emails are one of the most used modes of communication, which will only continue to grow as technology advances. It is important to factor email communication into your marketing strategy in order to stay relevant with your audience.

We all know that the time we spend on our phones completely skyrocketed in 2020, trending years earlier than predicted. Where have you been checking your personal email? According to the Global Web Index, it is likely you fall within the 72% of users that prefer to use their mobile devices over a PC. It is easier than ever to make sure your email is mobile-friendly. There are tools online like Be Free that have mobile responsive templates available at no cost to you.

Personalizing email is the best way to really connect to your audience at a deeper level. Sure, you could add a couple of email replacement codes into the email, but are you thinking of who you are sending that email to? Your audience appreciates that you know who they are to you. Spending time segmenting your audience to provide the best emails to the right person helps them know you are thinking about the individual, not the list.

Oftentimes, we communicate for the purpose of receiving a response, but keeping readers engaged can sometimes be difficult. If a reader knows that they are expected to do something while reading an email, it is well worth adding calls-to-action. We want to make that a call-to-action is as easy to identify as possible. Be sure to add a call-to-action button to make the link pop. The button will also give you an opportunity to break up some of the page's content, which will make it more digestible to the reader.

Readers want to know who has access to their email information. In fact, the FCC's guidelines require a footer that contains a mailing address, organization name, and link to unsubscribe in every mass distributed email. Standardizing your email footers is also an excellent way to assure your email does not get sent to spam.

Communicating to your audience via email is not going anywhere, so keeping your email strategy dynamic and up to date is essential to your success.

TIPS FOR USING DATA TO KEEP PEOPLE ENGAGED BETWEEN SUNDAYS:

- » Equip lay leaders with technology that allows them to check people into classes, mid-week small groups, and other activities that require regular attendance. Nowadays there are church apps that sync this data with the larger church database.
- » Run regular attendance reports out of your ChMS to see who is dropping off, and have a plan prepared for how to reach out to those individuals.
- » Over time, analyze attendance data to see if there are any telling trends. You may discover that certain demographics tend to peak or drop off at certain times of the year.
- » You can then use that information to equip lay leaders with strategies to combat lagging attendance or help new members assimilate more quickly and easily.



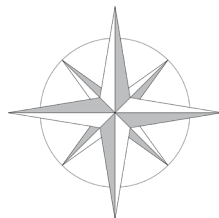
4 Drive Greater Commitment and Generosity

There are a couple of ways to use data to increase giving and drive people toward deeper levels of generosity. The first is to be purposeful about tracking and engaging with new givers. There is a tendency to believe that if someone gives once or twice, they will continue to give. What we've found in our research is that it takes five gifts before someone gives regularly. Knowing this, and being intentional about walking alongside people from their first to their fifth gift, is a great way to use the data you have at your disposal to drive generosity.

The second way you can use data to drive generosity is to meet with your top givers on a regular basis and share with them information about how their personal giving impacts real lives through the ministry. Many of your church's highest givers have full careers and busy lives that may prevent them from being as active in the church as they would like, but a personal relationship with these members can connect the dots between their career and the ministry their contributions support.

TIPS FOR DRIVING GREATER COMMITMENT AND GENEROSITY:

- » More often than not, there is someone in your church who could and would increase their generosity if only asked. Use giving data to find who the key givers are at your church, and connect with people who have willingness and capacity to give more.
- » Find out what your financial leaders are passionate about. Giving is deeply tied to what stirs our affections, so make time to meet individually with key givers at your church to find out what they value most.
- » Once you get those individuals engaged in ministries that are doing work with which they find emotional and spiritual resonance, their finances will follow.



Are You Ready to Eliminate the Guesswork Around Important Ministry Decisions?

Using the right ChMS, you can leverage data to make better decisions to support your church's values, drive higher engagement through relevant programs, communicate relevant messages to your target audience, and encourage deeper generosity.

FREE TouchPoint Trial

<http://try.TouchPointsoftware.com/TouchPoint-church-management-software/>

Connect with our team to learn more at info@TouchPointsoftware.com

About TouchPoint

TouchPoint is a mobile-first church management software solution that enables and equips church leaders to engage their people, fund their vision, and manage their church. Founded inside of Bellevue in Memphis TN, TouchPoint proudly offers solutions for all denominations. We are honored to serve alongside many churches inside and outside of the US and make their missions our missions.

About Andrew Triplett



ANDREW TRIPLETT

Director of Consulting

Andrew Triplett has been working in church software for over 10 years. In his role as Director of Consulting, Andrew works alongside our partner churches to help them understand TouchPoint, solve problems, and use the system to create more efficient and effective ministries.



TouchPoint