

Church Media—Making Technology Work



The Church is vibrant and alive—which means change is inevitable. In the realm of music, we’ve seen music change from choirs and orchestras to worship teams complete with guitars, drums and smoke.

Similarly, the communication of information has changed over time from paper bulletins to high-def projectors, digital announcements, and video streaming.

Certainly, media plays an important role in the effectiveness of a healthy church. But good technology can cost a lot of money.

Whether you’re building a new state-of-the-art worship facility or remodeling an existing building to incorporate leading technology, what steps should leaders take to ensure their audio and video choices will meet their ministry needs?

Here are some tips and best practices from audio and video experts Greg Slape and Jeff Nene.

1. Have a master vision of what you are wanting to accomplish. Form follows function; therefore, it’s important to know what needs will meet your overall vision. Will you need to create sermon dvds to dvd’s, or do you have more advanced needs like online video, an additional campus, and video streaming.
2. Bring in a consultant early in the design and build process. It’s critical to bring audio video consultants in before the project and building design begins. The earlier you bring in the technical consultant, the better off the project will go.
3. Find someone you can trust. Just like a pastor uses trusted resource materials to prepare a sermon, a qualified and capable expert will be a helpful resource. As you seek out a media consultant, remember to balance skills and expertise with someone who fits your organizational culture. Ask others for recommendations, and then perform due diligence to research those individuals. Visit other completed projects and talk with former customers to get a better understanding of your prospect’s capabilities.
4. Balance budget against quality and need. Your budget will reflect your priorities and needs. But even if you have a small budget, there are still some quality solutions for your organization.

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Church Media—Making Technology Work (cont.)

Don't forget to include maintenance, repairs, and upgrades in future budgets, or you may risk losing your initial investment.

Important Point: Consider leasing equipment as opposed to purchase, which may include maintenance and repair, as well as upgrades for future enhancements. Leasing is becoming very prevalent for technology in churches. Communication is key to your ministry, and leasing technology can allow you to have the tools to reach people and accomplish your ministry.

Maybe your church is ready to hire a tech or media director. If so, Greg and Jeff offer the following tips:

1. While you'll look for a tech director that has education, skills, and experience, you will also want to balance those abilities with a personality that fits within your team culture.
2. Build a relationship with your tech director, just like you would with your executive staff. Consider the role of the tech director like a pastoral role. Besides leading and ministering to a team of volunteers, the tech director will also need to be sensitive to what is going on during the worship service and in tune with the lead pastor's vision for the service.
3. Give time for your tech team to create a quality finished project each week. Input and ideas will need to be developed early in the week, and shouldn't wait until Saturday night. A two-minute video announcement can take a full day to draft, record, and produce.
4. Involve your tech and creative team early in the brainstorming process, such as the beginning of a sermon series. The creative team can be just as effective in the sermon preparation phase as the pastoral staff.

With these tips and best practices, your organization will be able to utilize leading audio and video technology to enhance your communication and ministry.

This article was excerpted from the video training called Church Administration Essentials: Media. Greg Slape is director of Design and Build Services at Special Event Services (GSlape@SpecialEventServices.com). Jeff Nene is president of Jeff Nene Production and Design ([Jeff@JeffNene.com](http://JeffNene.com)).

The complete video training, as well as several other topics, including Human Resources, Budgeting, Employment Benefits, IT Services, and Risk Management, can be found at http://www.agtv.ag.org/church_administration_essentials.