



The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 21



Have you mowed your lawn yet? Your answer reveals what part of the country you live in. In the South, we don't put our mowers up until December and then we have to get them back out around March. Have you ever noticed that no matter how good your mower is, unless you use it, your grass doesn't get cut? Simply *having* a lawn mower doesn't get your lawn mowed. The same can be said for your power tools and every other tool you own. A tool is worthless unless you use it, and use it properly.

OK, Coach, where is this leading? In this issue I want to talk about a tool that right now is your number one means of collecting funds, your digital platform. Consider these facts the accounting firm CapinCrouse recently discovered in a survey of churches.

- **90% of churches have seen an increase in online giving.**
- **53% of churches that saw an online giving increase saw it increase by over 20%.**
- **57% of churches increased discussion around offerings during online services.**

These statistics prove that **The Offering is NOT Dead; It's Different**. That is the title of a four part series I have written for my partner Gyve, <https://gyve.com/gyve-generosity-articles/>. We must realize that we are in a new day that demands new tools and strategy. That is why this edition of The Stewardship Coach is on and entitled **The Digital Giving Strategy**. My goal is to help you arrive at a strategy of how best to use your online giving tools.

First, let me list some of the **mistakes churches make with their online giving tool**. The most common mistakes churches make are:

1. **No tools.** One positive result of COVID-19 is nearly every church now has 21st tools for giving.
2. **Not the right tools.** If your only online option is PayPal, you have the wrong tool.
3. **Not enough tools.** Americans love options and we have to have multiple digital options.
4. **Not using the tool.** Too many churches before COVID-19 had no plans on how to use their digital tool.

Systems and Stories. If you have followed me for any length of time you know that is a focus of mine. Helping you have the best *systems* in place for increasing generosity. At the same time, the best way to increase generosity is by telling the story of generosity. With that in the back of our minds, let's start with ...

Systems – The Essential Tools for a Digital Giving Strategy – I have written extensively on this, so let me take a page out of Vol. 6 Issue 8 when I wrote ...

What systems should you have in place?

1. **Dynamic website.** I have written on this before, but your website is the first place most people will visit BEFORE they ever darken your doors. Make yours a good one!
 2. **Robust online giving platform, including text giving.** You should be working towards the majority of your giving coming in some type of digital means. **(I forgot to say, App!)**
 3. **Social Media platform and presence.** Like it or not, and sometimes I hate it, Social Media is where many people spend a great bulk of their time. If you are not there, you are missing an opportunity to connect with your people and those in your community.
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4. **Postage paid envelopes.** I know this sounds old school but in fact this can be a great tool if used properly.
5. **Extensive database of your donors.** A given is to have all your members' email addresses. Yet you need to also have the ability to break this list down by various subgroups; like first time givers, by consistency, etc.

After you have the essential tools for a Digital Giving Strategy, you must work toward helping people see the need to give to the cause you support, your local church!

“More carefully.” The Dunham and Company released a new study that found, **53% of donors say they plan to continue giving, but more carefully than before COVID-19.** This means that you *must always* work to make the case for giving. Your base is solidly with you. We already knew with the younger generations that we had a tough sell. Now what you sensed is a present reality.

How do you move people from more carefully to passionate generosity? It starts with going back to teaching biblical principles on giving, making generosity a key teaching element in our mission to make disciples. That is the end goal. Yet, we have to train up to that point. Where do you start? Start with *your* story. Remember, the Brooks Mantra,

Get a story, work your story, tell your story and people will give to support that story.

If you don't mind, let me self-plagiarize myself again from Vol. 6 Issue 8 when I wrote:

“Stories. You have to make the connection of how a dollar given at your church makes the world a better place. One of the best ways to do that is to tell the story of what your church is accomplishing for the Kingdom.”

Later in that issue, I wrote this:

“Rethink Communication: A Playbook to Clarify and Communicate Everything in Your Church,” is another book on communications that I recently read. Phil Bowdle, the author, makes a great point in this book when he says, “To effectively communicate your message, you'll need to stop building your strategy exclusively around physical attendance. Why? As my friend Dave Anderson says, “Church attendance is not decreasing, it's decentralizing.” **(Wow! This was written way before COVID-19!)**

This means you must be creative and consistent in communication to get your story heard. Gone are the days when you can make one announcement from the platform and everyone hears it. You must have multiple platforms with multiple streams of messaging to be heard.

In his book, Phil Bowdle references the marketing term, “the rule of seven.” Essentially, that means someone needs to hear your message seven times before they respond.”

Before they can hear your story, you have to have the systems in place. Without a compelling story, the best systems in the world are worthless. Look for more on this from me in the weeks to come!



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“Donor Confidence Strong in the Face of COVID-19” is a newly released report I am recommending you download at <https://www.dunhamandcompany.com/fundraising-research/donor-confidence-strong-in-the-face-of-covid-19/>.

Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach will be live Monday, May 18th at 11 AM. To register, go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/7081778876232214541>.

Missions and Ministry Moment

(aka offering talk)

#1 of The 16 Offerings of Summer! Let's make every one count. Here is mine.

Let's Not Forget

Has anyone realized that this is Memorial Day Weekend? Some of you. A few of you need reminding what day of the week it is, right? Memorial Day typically starts the summer off for us. What's typical these days?

Americans love Memorial Day in part because it gives most of us a three-day weekend. That used to be a big deal, but we have been on a three-month, three-day weekend, and the natives are restless! But I want to take just a moment at this time in our worship so we might never forget the true meaning of Memorial Day.

Memorial Day, celebrated on the last Monday of May, was first started to commemorate fallen Union soldiers that died in the Civil War. By the 20th century, it had grown to honor all Americans *killed* in all wars. Thus, we *thank* our living veterans on Veterans Day in November and *honor* our deceased veterans on Memorial Day in May.

Memorial Day developed from the early days into a day for general expressions of memory for deceased relatives, whether they had served in the military or not. Families would go to gravesites of passed loved ones to leave flowers to memorialize that person. So, the day is supposed to be a day of remembering and honoring those that have gone before us. Let's not forget the sacrifices they gave for us.

Speaking of sacrifices, have you ever considered that all that you enjoy here at YOUR CHURCH NAME is due to those who went before us? TELL BRIEFLY THE STORY OF YOUR BEGINNING AND THE SACRIFICES MADE THROUGH THE YEARS. Those people gave freely and sacrificially so that YOUR CHURCH NAME could be the lighthouse for the Good News we have become. Let's not forget that.

As we take up the offering this Memorial Day weekend, I want to encourage you to give a gift that would be worthy of those that have gone before us. Let your gift be a memorial to their faith. Let your gift help pave the way for future generations to be impacted by YOUR CHURCH NAME. The best way to not forget is to give in the same manner as those we memorialize.

Bonus Section

I have been attempting to introduce you to various experts in their field, as well as individuals that I feel have a service you might benefit from. One observation I have is that post-COVID-19, many churches are going to need to outsource work to outside firms. I wanted to introduce my followers to a new friend of mine, Rusty Faulks, the founder of Windwood Partners. I feel his expertise in all things HR related could be a huge benefit to churches. I talked to Rusty the other day and asked him ...

Me: Rusty, thanks for sharing with our followers. Tell me, first, what it is you do for churches?

Rusty: Windwood Partners offers a fractional HR service for small to mid-size church staffs (generally 25-80 employees). They get the thinking, advice, solutions, setting up basic processes from an experienced HR director on matters of people management, work culture, employee problems, and all things HR. We provide on-going, part-time (“fractional”), Director level services so the monthly cost is way less than a full-time HR director – whether you engage with Windwood Partners as little as ½ day a month or a day a week. We are flexible and want to figure out a solution that delivers what you need.

Me: Rusty, the other day we talked about how confusing a lot of these acts being passed are for churches. In particular, we talked about the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Can you go over what is that and what is it addressing?

Rusty: The FFCRA is a recently passed federal legislation that requires all employers with fewer than 500 employees, including non-profits and churches, to provide eligible employees paid leave when the employee is unable to work or telework due to 6 specific COVID-19 qualifying reasons. In addition, covered employers qualify for reimbursement of the paid leave through refundable tax credits.

Me: What are some of the nuances of the six qualifying reasons related to COVID-19 for emergency paid leave?

Rusty: Three of the reasons relate directly to the employee and absences are reimbursed at 100% of pay up to \$500 per day; the other 3 qualifying reasons are tied to care for someone else due to their own illness or doctor orders, school or daycare closure, and a rarely used similar situation clause – these reasons are reimbursed at 2/3 pay up to \$200 per day. The school or daycare closure, or childcare worker unavailable reason, is unique in that it qualifies for up to twelve weeks of job protected leave as an expanded Family & Medical Leave (FMLA).

Me: I understood there are some exemptions or exceptions for small employers with under 50 employees. Explain that and how does an organization qualify for that?

Rusty: The exemption option only applies to one qualifying reason – absence due to a child’s school or daycare closure or childcare unavailable. There are two rules that COULD apply, but the employer must meet specific criteria outlined by the Department of Labor (DOL) to qualify. This is one reason churches need to consider a partner to lead them through all of this!

Me: Rusty, my head is spinning reading this! I’m glad we have you lined up to speak on Monday, May 18th. I want to explore more about these issues and, specifically, how you can help churches navigate through this mine field.

Rusty: I look forward to that Mark!

To register for **Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach** on **May 18, 2020** at **11:00 AM EDT**, go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/7081778876232214541>.
