

Getting Started With Social Media in 3 Easy Steps

by Ogun Holder, ogunholder@gmail.com and Jessica Best, jess@bestofjess.com

Social media can be overwhelming. There are so many options and concerns that it's understandable why many ministers and spiritual leaders have not yet taken the plunge. However, creating an online presence is as simple as 1-2-3: blog, Facebook, and Twitter.

A blog is a landing place to keep congregants connected during the week. You can share additional ideas that didn't make it into your talk, or engage your community with thought-provoking questions. Share transformative events in your own spiritual journey. No matter your level of web savvy, there's a free blog platform out there for you.

The dead-simple Posterous.com lets you post by emailing a post to your blog. If you want more options for personalizing your design and layout, try Wordpress.com or Blogger.com. Blogs work best when they are updated regularly; just 400-600 words at least once a week. If you're not sure what to talk about, start by reading what other bloggers have created. Figure out what you like and don't like. Check out the Featured Blogs on the www.unity.org homepage for a few good ones. (Check out the Unity Worldwide Ministries' blog at UnityWorldwideMinistries.blog.com)



Connect with Ogun Holder at www.unityforall.org.

Unsurprisingly, Facebook is the most popular social medium today. Often, ministers who are not using Facebook are concerned about privacy, or lack thereof. Try creating a purely professional Facebook profile as the leader of your spiritual community. Share specific spiritual and church endeavors and gauge how much personal information you want to share here.

Whereas blogs should be updated once a week, try to check in on your Facebook page every day or two. Frequent updates will keep you engaged with your community. Warning: Resist the temptation to over-share. It's a good place to place pictures of community activities and celebrations, and invite people to upcoming events. Connect to other churches and ministers to learn from what they do well.



Jessica Best, www.bestofjess.com, is marketing manager at Emfluence Interactive Marketing.

Twitter, despite its rapid adoption as a social medium, is rarely used by many ministries. Adding Twitter to your marketing plan can connect you to an entirely different audience than Facebook. Twitter is a better platform for reaching people interested in a topic, not just interested in your church, and it's much easier for your followers to share your messages. If your ministry has a propensity for healing, focus your posts on healing affirmations, prayers, and quotes. Use Twitter's search feature to find other accounts to follow by topic. Try to follow five new accounts every week; chances are they will follow you back and you'll start to grow your audience quickly.