What is Digital Transformation?

Digital transformation is the integration of digital technology into all areas of a business, fundamentally changing how you operate and deliver value to customers or for churches, members. It's also a cultural change that requires organizations to continually challenge the status quo, experiment, and adept new ideas in order to more effectively reach their target audience.

Why Does Digital Transformation Matter to Churches?

The internet and social media are the new mission fields. In order for churches to better position themselves to compete in these new mission fields, churches must be willing to adopt new technologies & strategies. COVID-19 has driven a shift to technology and churches that want to succeed must understand how to merge technology with strategy.

Why Does Digital Transformation Matter to Churches?

Corporations around the world are understanding this and are making significant strides towards this reality. IDC forecasts that worldwide spending on technologies and services that enable digital transformation will reach $1.97 trillion in 2022.

Larger churches are also getting the message and beginning to make investments into a digital transformation strategy. According to a study from Hartford Institute for Religion Research, churches that embrace change, including the use of technology in their services, are more likely to thrive and grow.

Why Does Digital Transformation Matter to Churches?

By large, digital transformation is a people issue and culture drives people. It's not just about the access to data, content and information but it's how and when we access that data, content and information.

It is believed that culture is the most vital barrier to deploying an effective digital transformation strategy followed by an absence of understanding of digital trends.

What Role Does Culture Play in Digital Transformation?

The adoption of technology is driven by culture and the rate of adoption correlates to the impatience of the organization culture.

Simply put, churches are going to have to develop a culture of change in order to successfully pivot to a digital transformation strategy.

What Are Some Key Trends in Digital Transformation in 2022?

Video Marketing

You may have heard it said, "Video is King." It is absolutely true when it comes to marketing in 2022. The idea of video marketing isn't new. What has changed is how important video has become on every platform and channel. Video Marketing is one of the most effective marketing tools for the church in 2021 with Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and YouTube. If you're not creating video, you're likely falling behind.

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Digital Training

This trend has been picking up steam over the last year and is streamlining the volunteer process for church training. This frontier is in the infant stage and will expand into various discipleship training and even mesh with small group trainings and interactions around the scriptures throughout the week.

Remember the 167 hours that people are not in church during the week. Digital training will become a way the church can actively train people at their own convenience.

What Are Some Key Trends in Digital Transformation in 2022?

Creative Messages Hot Spots

Gone are the days where you could take a clip of your message from Sunday and get traction on social media. It has become more difficult to stand out in the social feed.

Many of the young fast-growing churches over the last year have been pioneering new creative hot spots from the Sunday message. The hot spot is a climax moment in the message. This clip from the Sunday message is then laced with creative designs, music in the background and fancy video editing.

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Interactive Church Services

In the future we will see digital engagement go beyond the current platforms. We will see members be able to engage during the message with live surveys and questions with an answer that could be asked to the entire audience during the service. This would engage members in service and online. The instant answer could be displayed on screen. How many of you have ever done ____? Yes or No answer. 78% admit to yes and it helps fuel the point in the message.

What Are Some Key Trends in Digital Transformation in 2022?

Cloud Based Creative Teams

The demands of church media are becoming immense with this media generation that even mid-sized church teams are becoming overwhelmed. The expectation even in rural areas is for high quality custom graphic design and video. Only the large churches can carry the weight with in-house teams of graphic designers, video editing teams, motion graphic teams for animation, and creative directors.

The demands are overwhelming but technology is allowing churches to function as never before. Just as remote working have exploded around the nation

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Text Response

Text based giving has been growing and is nothing new. Some churches are now receiving over 60% of their giving through text-based donations.

Text messaging is a form of communication today and easy to respond. Why use paper when you can get my digital response on a phone with ease?

To encourage this new method in your church, you could send a digital Starbucks gift card in response for a new visitor/ connect card, etc.

How Do I Develop A Digital Transformation Strategy?

Get buy in from your leadership. Remember, culture can be a major barrier to digital transformation. If you're dealing with a mindset that says, "we've always done it this way", then your digital transformation journey will be challenging at best.

Establish a clear set of goals and objectives for your digital transformation results. What purpose are you trying to achieve? (i.e. increase growth, increase engagement, increase giving, etc.). Who are you trying to reach? Why are you trying to reach them? What's your timeframe?

How Do I Develop A Digital Transformation Strategy?

Set a realistic investment level. You have got to see this as an investment and not just merely an expense for your ministry. How much are you realistically able to invest in year 1? Think about Year 2 & beyond as well.

Determine what technologies you want to invest in. There are many tools and technologies out there. You can become easily overwhelmed by trying to tackle everything at once. Start at a point that's realistic for your ministry to handle and grow from there.

How Do I Develop A Digital Transformation Strategy?

Secure & train staff. You can't do this alone. If you're fortunate enough to have people in your congregation that are somewhat technical and willing to volunteer their time and learn, that's great. If not, you may need to be willing to hire staff or contract with some sort of service provider.

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