

Selling Stewardship

*The Marketing Lens to Get the
Congregation on Board*

Carson Brown

First Presbyterian Church of Bonita Springs, Florida

Stewardship Kaleidoscope 2025

New Orleans, Louisiana



TODAY'S Agenda

An Overview of Marketing

Marketing as Communication

Foundational Principles

Technical Tools

Gaps

Idea Sharing for Your Next Chapter



The Background (or, why we're here)

The what: Stewardship campaigns often follow the same pattern. The committee labors for months to develop a theme, goal, and calendar; then, when it all comes together, ready to be published to the congregation, the response is dismal or discouraging.

The why: Successful stewardship has always been a reality as giving and tithing have been viewed as obligatory, but this is no longer the case in many churches, especially for those under 45, and in a multimedia world in which everything seems transactional, gifts must be earned, institutions are questioned, and attention must be competed to receive.

What is marketing?



What is marketing?



Let's just say, in its simplest form,
how I sell something to you.



88%

of Americans have been influenced
to purchase a product as a result of
some kind of marketing.



93%

of Americans have found digital
marketing more effective than print
marketing in persuading them to give.



What is marketing?



Let's just say, in its simplest form,
how I sell something to you.



of A...enced
to...re...lt of
and of...



of A...tal
mar...nt
ma...suading...e.



Why is marketing important?

Do we really have to “sell” stewardship?



Internal marketing is real - the need for effective marketing does not just exist outside of our churches in the secular world.

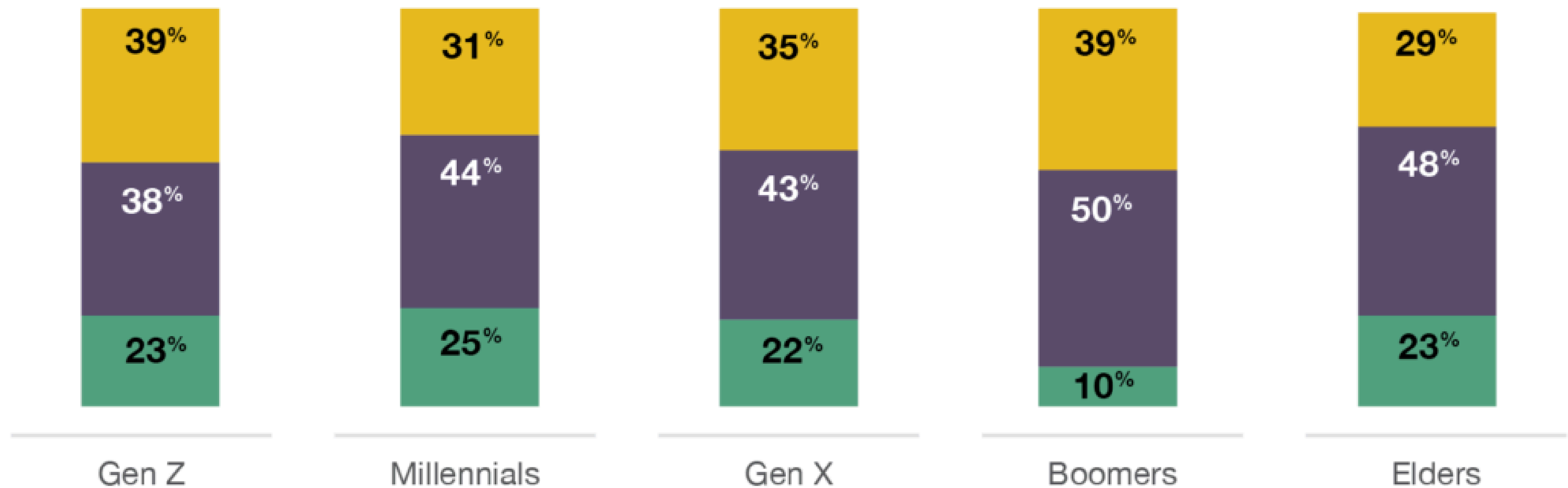
Often, our greatest resistance to “selling” stewardship is that we shouldn’t have to.

In a CT study, Gen Z affirmed that a “desire for authentic relationships stems from struggles with skepticism and hypocrisy in leadership”. This applies to *all* institutions.



Generally, would you say that society is becoming more generous, less generous or staying about the same?

- More generous
- Staying about the same
- Less generous



Barna's *A New Era of Giving* (Aug. 2023)
Part of the *State of Generosity* Series

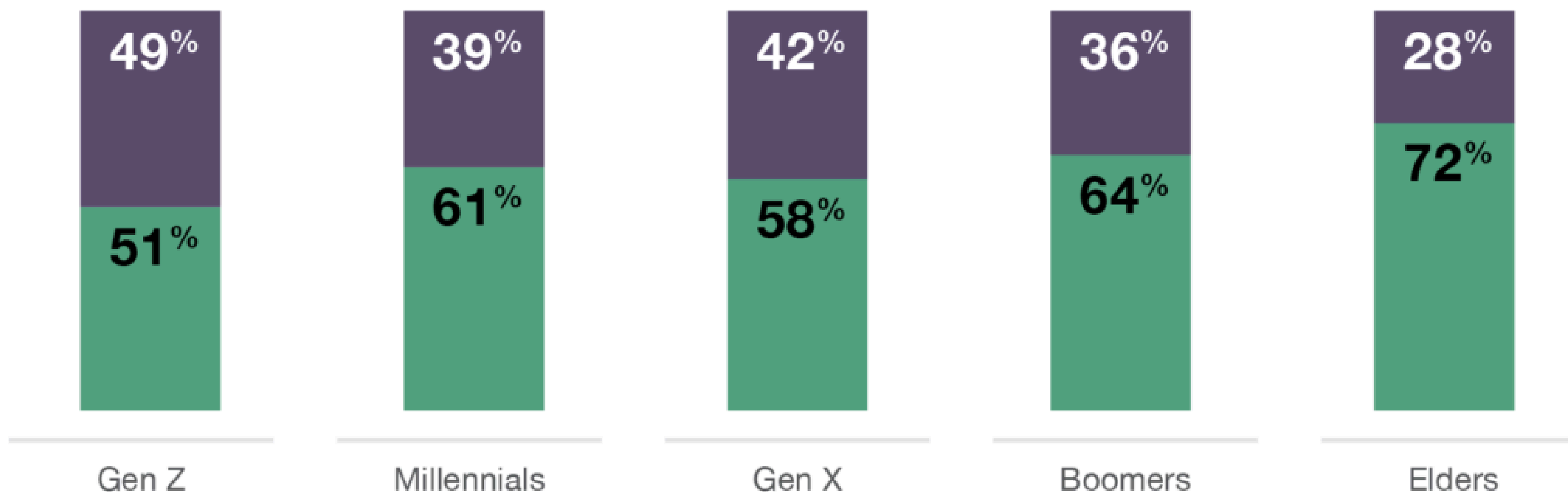
n=2,016 U.S. adults, November 12–19, 2021.



Reports of Charitable Giving Increase with Age

We'd like to ask about your generous giving. As of today in 2021, have you donated any money to charitable organizations, including churches or houses of worship?

● Yes ● No



Barna's ***A New Era of Giving***
(Aug. 2023)
Part of the ***State of Generosity***
Series

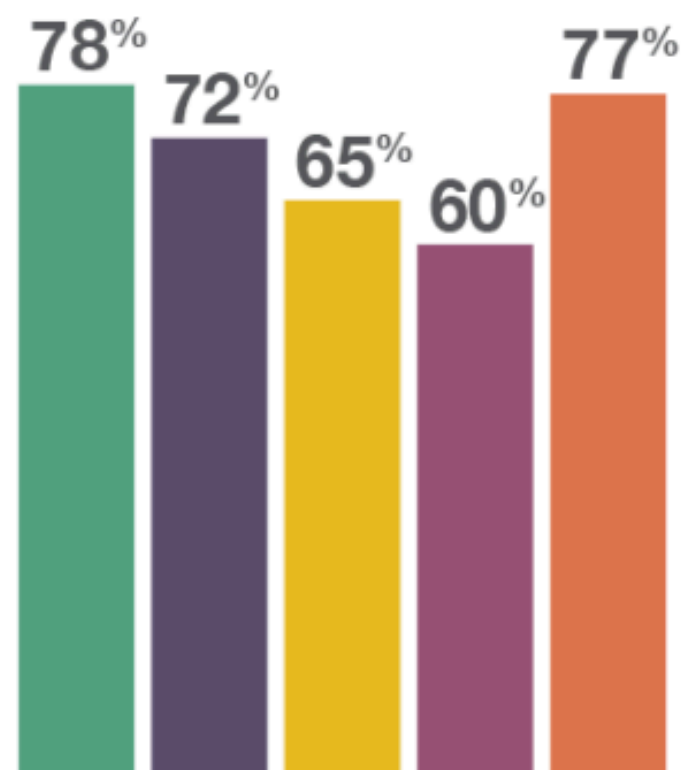
n=2,016 U.S. adults, November 12–19, 2021.

Due to the dates of data collection, general population research does not reflect 2021 end-of-year giving.

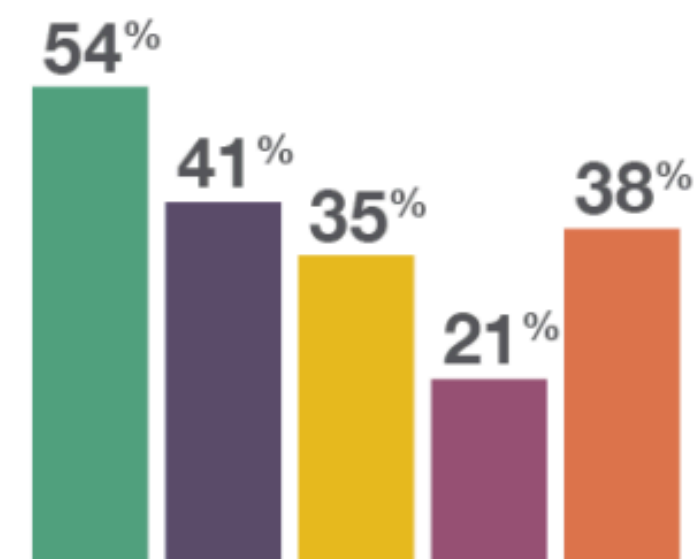


In the past three months, have you ... ?

● Gen Z ● Millennials ● Gen X ● Boomers ● Elders



Planned or evaluated
your finances



Volunteered your time to
an organization

n=2,016 U.S. adults, November 12–19, 2021.

The Foundational Principle of Church Giving in a Post-COVID World:

**Support must be earned;
it cannot be expected.**



So, how do we do marketing?

All marketing is communication!



1

Communication must be clear.

Action	Result
Identify and clearly understand campaign principles, goals, and objectives.	The stewardship team and leadership are on the same page.
Develop a strategy for plainly and meaningfully communicating these things.	The congregation understands,
Never assume knowledge!	You don't inadvertently forsake gifts from those with limited financial understanding.
Never expect even what's plainly obvious.	The congregation is informed about church needs and how they'll be addressed, instead of expected to know about them.



2

Communication must be tangible.

Action	Result
Think critically about how your church will best respond in this particular moment.	The stewardship team and leadership are on the same page.
Remember that “tangible” doesn’t necessarily mean “physical” - but it does mean “present”.	Home visits, digital marketing, and one-on-one stewardship are each prioritized.



TIME

Focused on Prayer

Prayer is the beginning of stewardship. Only when we spend time with God in prayer are we spiritually prepared to offer ourselves in service to others.

- ☐ Attend worship every Sunday
- ☐ Create a personal plan for regular prayer
- ☐ Spend 15 minutes a day in personal prayer
- ☐ Invite a friend or acquaintance to church
- ☐ Prayer together with my family
- ☐ Discuss my Christian faith with my children or grandchildren
- ☐ Read the Bible for one hour a week
- ☐ Schedule time for a spiritual retreat

The gift of my time, talent, and treasure is the right size:

- When I can no longer make an excuse for the size of the gift (large or small)
- When I can honestly state that the gift is sacrificial as I offer it in Thanksgiving to God.
- When I can honestly state that in the giving of my gift, I am being honest with God and self.

TREASURE

Financial Generosity

Guide to Giving

In order to better understand your offertory, please use the chart below to calculate a gift based on five percent of household income. Thank you for your generous support.

Income	Weekly 5%	Monthly 5%	Annually 5%
\$20,000	\$19	\$83	\$1,000
\$40,000	\$38	\$167	\$2,000
\$60,000	\$58	\$250	\$3,000
\$80,000	\$77	\$333	\$4,000
\$100,000	\$96	\$417	\$5,000
\$120,000	\$115	\$500	\$6,000

My financial commitment to Cypress Lake in 2023

First & Last Name

Email

Telephone

Street Address

City

State

ZIP

Total pledge

\$

I will give my pledge as follows... (complete one)

\$ _____ per week

\$ _____ per month

\$ _____ per quarter

\$ _____ per other

Please complete this commitment card and return via mail, email, or it in the offering plate.

And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: “Jesus is the Messiah.” Acts 5:42

Cypress Lake
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

365
Stewardship
Every Day
Acts 5:42

Our mission:

Led by the Holy Spirit, we joyfully reach out to the community in faithful love and service as we mature in Discipleship and share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

STEWARDSHIP BASICS

The underlying motive of being a good steward is love: if we love God, we desire to find and love a church community and support it with the generous gift of ourselves.

- **Stewardship of Time:** "Love the Lord your God with all your heart." In order to keep this commandment, we have to spend time in prayer, talking to the Person we love most.
- **Stewardship of Talent:** "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love requires that we act in the best interests of others. How can you serve others by your involvement in church programs?
- **Stewardship of Treasure:** "For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will. but first they gave themselves to the Lord" (2 Corinthians 8:3-5).

Why an annual commitment?

So much can change in a year that it's important to annually reassess our commitments to our Lord. You may have more or less time to devote to ministries, or more or less money to contribute through tithing. This card is the way we invite you to express your annual commitment to God.

365
Stewardship
Every Day
Acts 5:42

TALENT

Service in Ministries

You can read about each of the ministries listed below in one of our seasonal program packets or by inquiring with a member of the staff. When you sign up and indicate your interest, the leader will contact you to explain how to get involved.

Support

- ___ Support Ministry Team
- ___ Finance Committee
- ___ Stewardship Committee
- ___ Personnel Committee
- ___ Property maintenance

Commitment to Worship

- ___ Commitment to Worship Ministry Team
- ___ Serving as an usher
- ___ Serving as a liturgist/Scripture reader
- ___ Gloria Choir
- ___ Voices in Bronze (bell choir)
- ___ Praise Team
- ___ Decorating the sanctuary for special events
- ___ Audio/Visual Tech Team

Christian Education

- ___ Christian Education Ministry Team
- ___ Participating in book/Bible studies
- ___ Boy Scout Troop 101
- ___ Monday night men's group
- ___ Women's book/Bible studies
- ___ Teaching/assisting children's Sunday School
- ___ Assisting in youth group

Fellowship and Evangelism

- ___ Fellowship Ministry Team
- ___ Kitchen crew
- ___ Coffee hour set-up/take down
- ___ Planning fellowship outings
- ___ Serving as a small group leader in 2023
- ___ Concert planning committee

TALENT (CONT.)

Service in Ministries

You can read about each of the ministries listed below in one of our seasonal program packets or by inquiring with a member of the staff. When you sign up and indicate your interest, the leader will contact you to explain how to get involved.

Mission

- ___ Mission Ministry Team
- ___ Operation Christmas Child
- ___ Clothes Closet
- ___ Mision Peniel
- ___ Beth-El Farmworker Ministry
- ___ Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance
- ___ Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center
- ___ Knit One, Pray Too
- ___ Faithful Women
- ___ Presbyterian Women
- ___ South Fort Myers Food Pantry
- ___ Super Kids Club
- ___ Project Linus Blankets
- ___ Stephen Ministry
- ___ Serving as a deacon



English and Spanish worshippers gather on the first Sunday after Hurricane Ian in the Fellowship Hall | October 2, 2022

2

Communication must be tangible.

Action	Result
Think critically about how your church will best respond in this particular moment.	The stewardship team and leadership are on the same page.
Remember that “tangible” doesn’t necessarily mean “physical” - but it does mean “present”.	Home visits, digital marketing, and one-on-one stewardship are each prioritized.



3

Communication must be genuine.

Action	Result
Present a buy-in and ROI for your campaign (the “Ticket to Titanic”) dilemma.	The congregation understands the stakes and is invested in the outcome.
Ensure the stewardship and leadership teams are invested personally.	The campaign purpose is communicated on a more intimate level.
Answer this question: <i>why is stewardship necessary in our church?</i>	As long as your answer isn’t “because we do it every year”, you’ll find an effective talking point.
Be careful not to become too secular.	We remember that we’re Christians!



4

Communication must be strategic.

Action	Result
Develop a marketing timeline, including follow up.	Your campaign does not drag on, for the committee or for the congregation.
Make your stewardship campaign an immersive experience.	People discuss “the stewardship campaign” and “VBS” in the same sentence.
Remember high school: logos, ethos, pathos.	The campaign does not get boring.
Be intentional about who speaks for you.	It can’t always be the pastor, and maybe it shouldn’t always be the stewardship chair.



5

Communication must be personal.

Action	Result
Make it your own.	The congregation champions your individuality.
Mean what you say.	You won't tell people things such as "every little bit helps" if you don't truly believe it.
Celebrate givers of all levels, individually and corporately.	People feel valued and respected.
Consider why non-profit competition is effective.	We transition away from our "the church has earned it" mentality.
Engage unconventional perspectives.	Be unconventionally surprised.



Some communication gaps

Self-sabotage

Unintentional isolation

The banality of boredom

Getting too secular or
corporate

Not saying “thank you”

The “money” ink blot

Repetitiveness

Self-sabotage!

Where
now?



Thank you!

Carson Brown
239-339-3440
cbrown@fpcbonita.org