

FORMULA TWELVE

The Formula of Events
Leader's Notes



The Formula of Events: The Events Formula

Executing a great event is paramount to attracting new people to your church.

A big event is an all-out push toward a single Sunday for the purpose of breaking the next growth barrier and setting an attendance record in order to reach as many people as possible for Jesus.

The Events Formula expresses that every person involved in the execution of an event affects the total attendance and success of the event.

There's nothing like a big event to ignite some passion and mobilize people for service. When you share your vision for reaching a new level through a big event, you will find people more than willing to give extra time and energy to the cause.



“Big events reap incredible benefits. No matter the size of your congregation, be amazed at what a community event will do to bring people into the church. A big event is a way for them to invite their friends to church for something nonthreatening.” - Ed young jr

Outreach from Power

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

One of the definitions of 'power' in this verse is 'efficiency.'

Power = “Efficient” Events

Unfortunately, when it comes to executing great events, *efficiency* is not the word that best describes most church’s efforts.

Every pastor has found themselves saying:

I have put time, energy, and money into events that drew huge crowds, yet did not result in increased Sunday attendance for even one week.

I have seen events succeed in every measurable way except the way that mattered most.

I am not happy with our level of excellence.

I don’t feel like some of our events have purpose.

Efficiency for outreach should be defined as the effectiveness of an event in attracting unchurched people to church on a Sunday morning.



Evangelistic Temperature

Before you plan your big event, make sure the evangelistic temperature of your organization is at its highest level. Your evangelistic temperature can be controlled through three channels:

STAGE

Tell stories from your own experiences evangelizing. Preach on evangelism. Let others tell stories of life-change from the stage or through video.

STAFF

When it comes to raising the evangelistic temperature through your staff, you have to challenge them to be actively involved in evangelism, and then you have to hold them accountable for what you've asked them to do.

If you challenge and hold your staff accountable in the following four areas, you will see their passion for evangelism ignite:

1. Serve in evangelistic activities.
2. Pray for unchurched friends.
3. Pray and fast for big days.
4. Invite friends to church - From time to time, I will ask people on my staff, "Who have you invited to church lately?" or "Who was the last unchurched friend to come to church with you?"

STRUCTURE

Ensure that you empower ministry teams to help reach and assimilate new people. Ensure that every volunteer sees how their effort helps to win people to Christ.



Outreach in Growth Terms is Defined As:

Efforts that use the Sunday morning worship service as the primary way to reach unchurched people.

Let's unpack the two thoughts in this statement.



Why Sunday Morning Only?

1. It is still reserved in the societal consciousness.
(unusual for school or sport events to take place on a Sunday)
2. Your energies will be targeted at people who don't belong to another church.
3. You are at your highest level of excellence.
(Sunday should be what you do best as an organization)
4. 93% of Christians in the US are saved in a local church on a Sunday morning.

To Reach Unchurched People...

Your event should:

Target people in your local community.

Target friends and family members of people who currently attend your church.

Your event should not:

Target people who attend church already.

Many of our efforts to 'grow' are targeted at people who already attend church; concerts, speakers, etc.

Target benevolence or door-to-door efforts.

This is a worthy cause, but won't produce growth. Events that focus on relationships that already exist are much more effective.

“If you aren't sure how to begin outreach to the un-churched, start by focusing on people who are under tension, undergoing transition, or in trouble. Time and time again, I have found that people are most open to hearing the truth of the gospel when God has them in one of these three situations.”

-Nelson Searcy



Resourcing Big Events

Many leaders state that big events cost too much, thus are not a part of their approach to outreach.

Money spent on outreach is never an expense it's always an investment.

The heart always follows money.

Matthew 6:21 - *Wherever your treasure is, your heart will be also.*

When you don't have the resources for an event that reaches everyone, zero in on one segment that makes the most sense for your church. Drawing the un-churched doesn't always require a meal or a carnival. Instead, ask yourself, "What issues are the people in our church's community dealing with right now?"



Planning Events

There are two things you should consider when you begin the initial planning of a big event.

Targeted events in proper season are the most effective tool:

Targeted Events - Events should motivate the congregation and interest the unchurched.

“I promise our regular attenders that if they will invite someone to Fellowship, we will make sure that the moment their friend or family member pulls into the parking lot, he or she will feel comfortable and welcome.” - Ed Young, Jr.

The event and sermon series should answer a question, touch a need or facilitate a time people enjoy.

Proper Season - Be strategic about scheduling your day. Calendar placement matters.

Make sure your event is on a day that is going to give you the best opportunity to reach the most people possible in your community. April (Easter), September (Back to School), and December (Christmas) all mark seasons for big events. These are the most fruitful times to reach new people.

Fall is one of the best times of the year for a big day, and the best time in the fall for your big day is one month after school begins.



Successful events include:

- Invites
- Involvement
- Preparation
- Promotion

Let's take the next few moments to unpack what these four components actually consist of.



Successful events include:

Invites

Every believer has 5 unchurched relationships. Research indicates, 82% of these people would come if invited.

“Evangelism: The Why and How,” church growth expert Elmer Towns reports that 86% of new converts say they came to church for the first time because of an invitation from a friend or relative.

People invited by a friend are more likely to invite a friend on their own, whereas those who came because of a public announcement assume that others will begin attending for the same reason they did.

Ask yourself: Does my invite strategy capture my churches heart and hands?

Heart (Inspiration) - Are people excited about seeing their friends saved and excited for the big events or services? Does it inspire them to reach people through vision and sermons. Ex: “If you will invite this will be the greatest Easter ever!”

Hands (Tools To Invite) - Give them tools to invite. People will not just make calls or send notes. Ask them for addresses so you can send invites on their behalf. Give them invitation cards to hand out. Take time in service to engage their technology (Text, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)



Successful events include:

Involvement

For every 1 person involved in executing an event, 4 people will attend to “support” as they serve.

Ask yourself: Have I gotten every generation involved?

If you want an event to attract every generation already represented in your church, the event needs to involve every generation already present in your church. For Example:

Get everyone praying for the event.

Seniors to bake for the event.

Adults to build set design and sing in the event choir.

Kids to showcase with a special song or drama.

“Aim to get as many people praying for your big day as you possible can. As you begin to pray over your big day, make sure you set an attendance goal right up front. Pinpoint a number. A goal will stretch you and at the same time give you a measuring stick to see just how far you've been stretched - or more aptly, to see how much God has done.”

-Nelson Searcy



Successful events include:

Preparation

We recommend at least a 10 week plan to execute a successful big event.
(This 10 week plan will be covered extensively in our White Board Session)

Your level of preparation is directly linked to the number of people God will send to your church.

Ask yourself: Does my preparation ensure I will be happy with everything on Monday?

Pastors of growing church generally don't put in a great deal more work time than pastors of non-growing churches. The difference is that pastors of growing churches have learned to work smart, not just hard. They invest their time in areas that produce growth.



Successful events include:

Promotion

People need to be told about your big event at every possible level. (FB, mailers, announcements, etc)

When you are dealing with promotion, understand that you are never going to get a one-to-one ratio of return. Don't expect to; or you will be disappointed. You won't mail out one postcard and get one first-time guest.

If you look at most church advertising, it's obvious that it was written from a believer's viewpoint, not from the mind-set of an unchurched person. Make sure your graphics and language speak to the recipients.

Even with the best media advertising and social media, word of mouth is still the best form of marketing.

Ask yourself: Have I promoted enough that my core is excited and my community is informed/intrigued?

Core Is Excited - Don't just give them the dates and details, make sure they know this is an event to see the Kingdom grow and they can play a part.

Community Is Informed/Intrigued - Share the essential details clearly (date, time, place, website, etc.) and make sure that the details address something that is relevant to people's everyday lives (marriage, felt needs, etc.)



Think Practically

Events should open a door not close a door for a guest. Begin a new series on the event day so that people will want to return the following weeks.

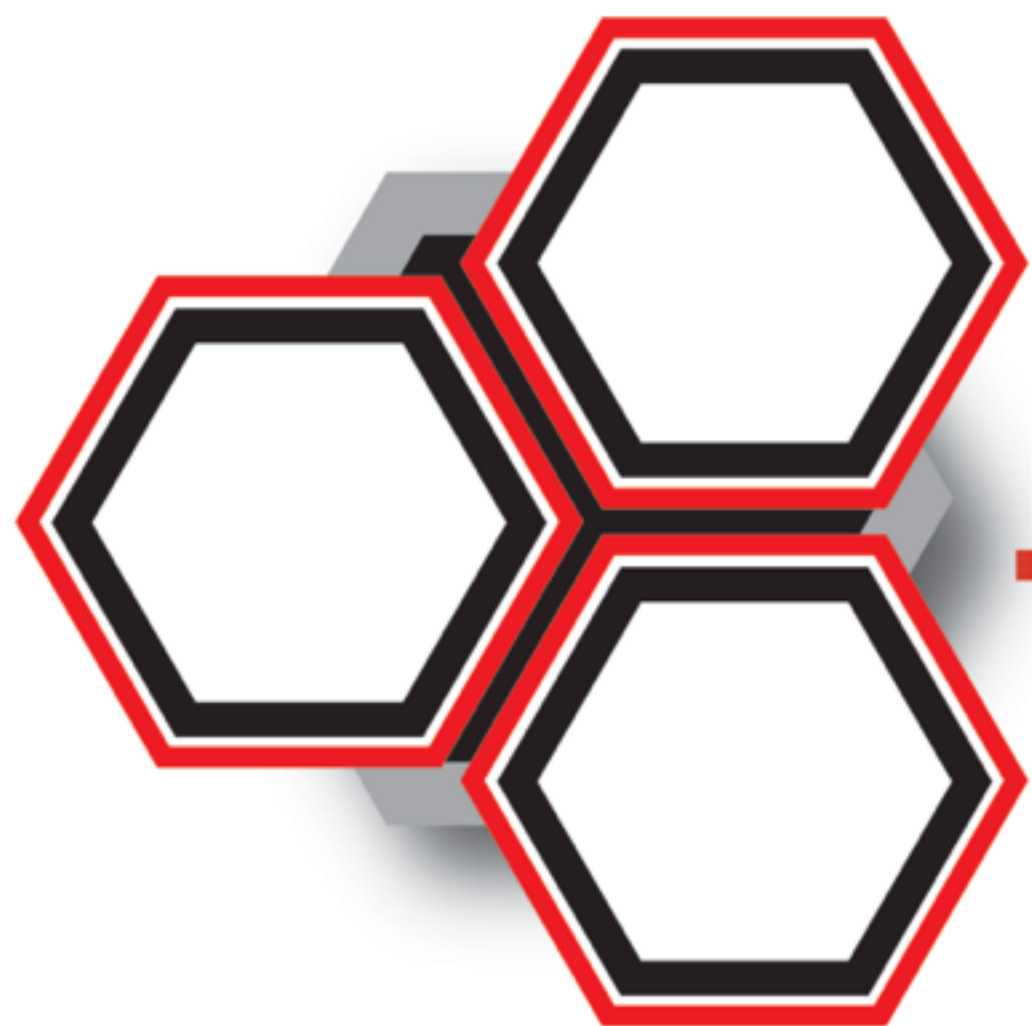
Bulletin should speak to the needs of guests. Announcements should speak to next steps for guests. Signage should display clear directions for guests. Good parking spots should be made available for guests.

What attracted large crowds to Jesus' ministry? Jesus did three things with crowds: He loved them (Matthew 9:36, et al.), He met their needs (Matthew 15:30, Luke 6:17-18; John 6:2, et al.), and He taught them in interesting and practical ways (Matthew 13:34; Mark 10:1; 12:37, et al.) Begin with the felt needs to the unchurched - Whenever Jesus encountered a person he'd begin with *their* hurts, needs, and interests.

Everything about the day should point to the next week.

Assume everyone in the room is there for the first time.





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The Formula of Events

White Board

Familyfest Fall Big Event (Planning) Sunday, September 11

- Following Sunday AM Service: Familyfest Event (Carnival/festival atmosphere geared toward young families)
- Begin Family Portrait Sermon Series (Deals with the truth that there is no picture perfect family)

Notables

- Teen Drama (September 11)
- Kids Choir (September 18)



The Formula of Events

White Board

Promotional & Invite Effors

- Billboard (Month before)
- Constant Contact Emails
- Movie Theater Commercial
- Congregational General Invites (3 weeks before)
- Participant Invites (Mailed 2 weeks before)
- Past Attendees Invites (Mailed 3 weeks before)



The Formula of Events

White Board

Event

- Petting Zoo
- Clowns
- Blow Ups
- Food
- Games

Weekly Checklist

- 12 weeks: What, who, when, where, how
- 11 weeks: Start contacting and recruiting everyone to be involved
- 10 weeks: Begin rehearsals (children's program, adult musical, etc.)



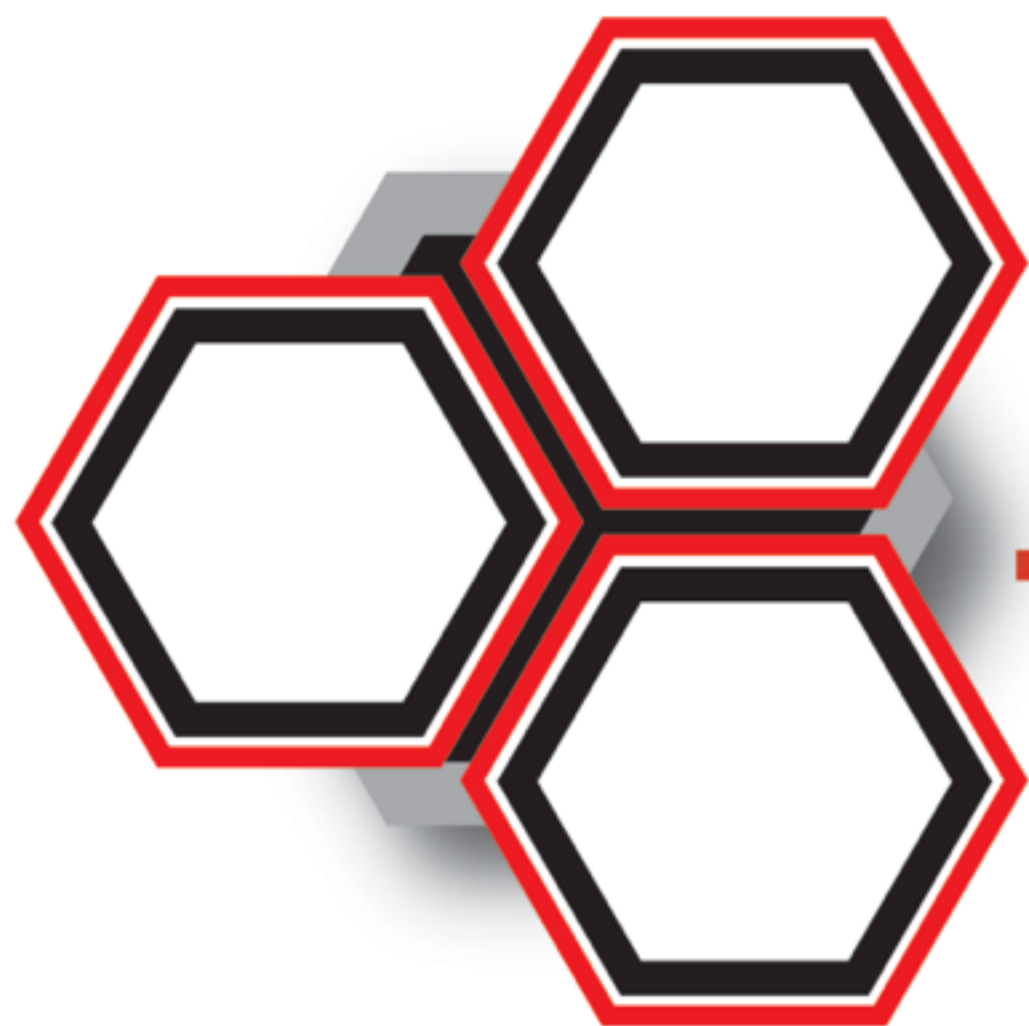
The Formula of Events

White Board

Weekly Checklist

- 9 weeks: Prepare videos, print registration materials, handouts & brochures
- 8 weeks: Start training all the teams (first impression, follow up, nursery, outreach)
- 7 weeks: Continue training (collect invite contacts from those involved)
- 6 weeks: With excitement ask for more volunteers
- 5 weeks: Rehearsals and contacts continue
- 4 weeks: Engage public marketing, contact media and give press-releases
- 3 weeks: Start advertising with excitement (invite participant's contacts)
- 2 weeks: Go through everything with everyone involved during rehearsal after church
- 1 week: Make sure everyone is ready, excited and inviting all their family & friends
- 2 days: Set up everything and do a run through.





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The Formula of Events

Lab

Checklist:

Schedule a meeting to identify the upcoming event and create a 10 week plan.

Read *Ignite* by Nelson Searcy.

Meet with your team to brainstorm event details, creative elements, how you can employ the 82% truth and how you can get as many people involved as possible.

Discussion Questions:

? What efforts do we need to move to Sunday AM for maximum outreach potential?

? What event would get the most people involved and excited?

? What sermon series topic would our congregation most likely to invite a friend to?

Tool: Event Planning Packet

