

Presentation of Findings

Membership Planning

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Harrisonville, Missouri

September 4, 2019

Contents

- **Overview**
 - Key Findings
 - The Advantages of St. Peter's
- **T-Plan**
 - Market target
 - Source of business
 - Competitive frame
 - Buying incentives
- **Brand Insights**
 - Key Issues
 - Strategies
- **Brand Essence**
- **Tone & manner**
 - To serve and connect
 - "The Elevator Talk"

Key Findings

- The way we grow is to engage with the community more conspicuously.
 - The condition of the community calls for focused, practical service through the week.
- Sunday services could be accomplished without a full-time Rector.
- To expand engagement with the community, a Rector could make the difference.

The Advantages of St. Peters

- **St. Peter's Episcopal Church serves spiritual life and growth, by engaging people around their needs. An historic and integral part of the community, the Church offers connection with traditional forms of worship and up-to-date answers for life.**

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Market Target

Uncertain Civic Identity

Disadvantaged, Disengaged

- **Harrisonville, the County seat is the third largest city in the County.**
 - Belton and Raymore together are three times its size.
 - Proximity to Kansas City favors them for employment, growth, and opportunity.
 - Harrisonville, too, is connected to KC for jobs, but less efficiently.
 - No longer self-sufficient for jobs, retail, or entertainment.
- **The sense of community is weakened: town or suburb?**
 - “Bedroom Town” outlook may be reflected in voting data:
 - About 10,000 population
 - About 6,000 registered voters
 - Only 1,687 voted in recent Mayoral election [28%]
 - (Nationally 60% vote in Presidential; 40% in Mid-Terms)
- **Location of County services is said to contribute to a higher index of disadvantaged persons.**

Market Target

Demographic Factors

Sources: City-Data.com & U.S. Census

- **Population grew 12.9% from 2000 to 2017**
 - Compared with 8.6% statewide growth, same period
- **Median household income increased just 4%**
 - \$41,412 compared with \$51,746 statewide
 - 25% below the Missouri median
 - 30% below U.S. median
 - Harrisonville median is 9% below U.S. "low-income" definition
- **Median home value rose 59.9% to \$132,445**
 - 14% below Missouri median of \$151,400
- **Identify as 89.4% White (2016; 95% in 2010 census)**
 - 6.3% two or more races
 - 3.1% Hispanic
 - 2.1% Black
 - 0.2% Asian
 - .05% American Indian
- **17.9% of residents live in poverty as of 2016**
 - Defined as \$25,750 for family of four
 - Statewide average of 14% [27.8% higher]
 - National average of 12.7% [40.9% higher]

Source of Business

What behavior, needs, or life events
bring people to St. Peters?

- Prospective parishioners more likely to encounter St. Peters outside of church services than by actual “sampling” on Sunday.
- So engaging Harrisonville through other venues is vital.
- Mayor Bowman sees particular need to offer role models to youth:
 - Exposure to caring, loving adults is a lack and a need.
 - Male mentors are particularly lacking.
 - Mentor relationships might work two-way
 - e.g., tech skills vs. life-skills
- Some civic/social services are overlooked even now,
 - e.g., career clothes closet, job preparedness.
- Bible studies need not be the exclusive province of other denominations, fundamentalists.

Competitive Frame

An Era of Change

A Self-Centered Sensibility

- Digital culture brings delusion of connection.
 - User-controlled communication contributes further to disengagement.
- Evangelical or fundamentalist churches appear to thrive locally. (?)
 - Times of stress favor authoritarian leadership.
 - Lack of harmony between fundamentalist/evangelical positions and “The Summary of the Law.”
 - Mark 12:28-34; Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; etc.
- All denominations report declines in Average Sunday Attendance nationally.
 - People are finding answers outside of church.
- Doing something other than church – or nothing – on Sunday is likely the biggest competitor.

Competitive Frame

People Need Help

Finding It Elsewhere

- The “self-help” industry is projected to be worth \$13 billion by 2022.
 - Books, TV, blogs, seminars, workshops, retreats
 - Dates to 1859 *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles
 - Same year as Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*
 - Same year as John Steward Mill’s *On Liberty*
 - A Missourian, Dale Carnegie, was pivotal.
 - *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936) 15 million copies
 - Sold out 17 editions in its first year alone
 - Ranks 19th, *Time* magazine’s list of the 100 most influential books
- So it’s not that people feel the way they want to feel, or that Missourian’s aren’t part of that search.

Membership Motivations

How to Belong

How to Improve

- The need to gather and join still exists. Why is it so eclipsed?
- Belonging is part of identity.
- Goals seem to unite people.
- Becoming identified with a goal may be useful.
- Personal development also attracts a significant segment nationally. (See *Self-Help*.)
- Recovery is a way of life for significant parts of the population.
- Self-improvement (skills, awareness) is a less noticeable motivator.
- Yet still appears operative in relation to parents/children.

Key Issues

Societal

- People go willingly in the opposite direction:
 - individualistic, secular, post-modern, material
- Divisions define: people get energy from opposing each other.
- Church membership declines generally and specifically
 - traditional denominations
 - The Episcopal Church
 - (Members, Parishes and ASA)
- Complexity is suspect; faith in institutions is low.

Key Issues

Community

- Tastes and preferences appear non-traditional, informal
- Direct competitors have “non-traditional” covered.
 - independent and established congregations alike
- Available population mainly less than prosperous.
 - many disadvantaged and distressed
- Qualified youth leave town; stagnation results.

Key Issues

Our Parish

- Critical need to add younger parishioners and involve them
- Friendly, yet Awareness too low to attract
 - inclusive, yet what we offer appears unpopular
- Formal, hard to follow, demands care and study to begin
- Size is both advantage (agility) and disadvantage (reassurance)

Key Issues

Our “Product”

- We offer satisfaction and fulfillment.
 - The short-term and long-term versions of feeling good.
 - Redemption and salvation might be disregarded.
- How important are our traditional forms?
- “Anybody can do it like everybody.”
- How important is commonality?
 - (our similarities with each other)
- Are we willing to reach among the disadvantaged and serve them?
- Could connecting with history/heritage be made appealing?
 - Community
 - Religion

Strategies

Identity

Outreach

Engagement

- **1. IDENTITY & POSITION**
- Define what we offer.
 - Meaningful
 - Differentiating
 - Motivating
- Identify relevance to young people.
 - Couples
 - Parents
 - Others

Strategies

Identity

Outreach

Engagement

■ 2. **OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT**

- Make community engagement conspicuous (awareness)
 - Focus?
 - Consistency
 - Capitalize on facilities, capacity
- Consider specific service/outreach to disadvantaged
 - e.g. Food Pantry
- Engage with digital communications too
 - Intercept town and resource site visitors (PPC?)
 - Expand Facebook campaign (ads?)

Strategies

Identity

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- **3. ON-BOARDING PROTOCOL**
- Make “how-to” enjoyable
 - Enquirers’ class dinner or refreshments/reception
 - The story of the liturgy – how it came to be this way
- Personal testimony, “What St. Peter’s means to me.”
- Consider worship options based on respondents
 - Forms of music
 - Service times
 - Resources
 - e.g., child care

Strategies

Identity

Outreach

Engagement

■ 4. ASSESS ROLE & REQUIREMENTS for MINISTER

- Is a Rector needed to execute & fulfill strategies?
- What sort of Rector?
 - Outlook & Orientation
 - Sense of Purpose, Mission
 - Preparation, Experience
 - Subjective Qualities
- Role of Diocese in selection
- Preferred process of St. Peter's
 - Drafting Profile and Goals

Brand Essence

Inside Language

Reminder

Aiming Point

- St. Peter's is a fundamental part of Harrisonville.
- It is part of an established, national denomination.
- It is part of a global communion.
- It has a heritage of traditional worship and teaching.
- It works to serve people's own needs today.

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- **Scripture – Tradition - Reason**

Tone & Manner

To Serve & Connect

- We move away from institutional language.
 - Conversational, yet not condescending
 - Sensory, not theoretical
- We attract others with satisfaction and fulfillment.
- The people of St. Peter's serve the community with their various strengths and abilities.
 - What we're interested in, what we do well, we offer in service.
- We offer easy ways to connect with St. Peter's:
 - Conversationally ("elevator talk")
 - In conventional (public) media
 - In digital (private) media
 - With occasional, focal incentives (events)

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Tone & Manner

“The Elevator Talk”

- *[Our “elevator talk” is hinged on a five-part memory device, based on the five fingers, to make remembering easier and facilitate returning to key points if and when we are fortunate to be interrupted with a question.]*
- St. Peter’s is a part of Harrisonville that serves people’s spiritual lives and offers practical help, too.
- You may feel a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction from what we offer here, maybe even relief.
- Our ministry is grounded in Bible teachings.
 - does not seek to exclude people
 - is available to everyone
- People who choose to belong see themselves as part of the life of St. Peter’s, and find it becomes a welcome part of who they are.
- The beauty and comfort of tradition opens people’s hearts at St. Peter’s.

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