



# 2018

# Communication Strategy

*Unabridged Edition*

## Where to begin?

There you are, sitting at your desk, with a great idea for letting the congregation know about your ministry, your upcoming event, your serving opportunity, or your resource. It's going to be amazing, if only people know about it!

*How do you connect your ministry planning with the people in your ministry?*

The Communications Team desires to guide and assist you to convey your ministry passion to your target audience with maximum engagement. We are your in-house brand consultants, event promoters, and mass communication specialists. We're here to serve you.

But there are a lot of things to consider as you wade into the waters of mass communication at Bent Tree. This booklet is here to guide you through the process, from A to Z. The content is arranged to walk you through the steps for a successful experience.

As you look over the Table of Contents on the next page, the following questions should arise, which will guide you along the path to effective communication with the people in your ministry:

- Do I have a solid understanding of Bent Tree brand concepts?
- Am I familiar with the look and feel of what is on-brand?
- How do my goals align with larger ministry goals for this year? What is success for this event?
- Who is my specific audience, and what are their communication needs?
- Which communication channels might connect with my audience best?
- Do I have all the pieces I need to submit a request?

We look forward to serving you with your communication needs!

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# I. Embody the Bent Tree Brand

A brand is more than a logo. It starts with key concepts that coalesce in the context of an organization. Who is Bent Tree? What is of core importance to us? This is the essence of the brand, and as a stakeholder in this organization, these concepts should be the groundwork for each interaction you have as a representative of Bent Tree.

## **TAGLINE**

The tagline is the simplest form of the brand concept. For Bent Tree, it is “experience Life.” One way to explain this concept is as follows:

“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:11-12). If you are a believer in Jesus, you have his Life in you!

But the problem for many of us is that we often fail to experience that Life in a day-by-day basis, don't we? Many times, we forget who he has remade us to be, and we need to be reminded of our identity in Christ. Or maybe, we've become trapped in legalism, believing the lie that following the right rules/habits/disciplines in the right way will somehow bring us closer to God. Or maybe, we've become deceived by sin, and need But Christ has paid for every sin, he has made us new, and has brought us into union with himself.

And his grace is sufficient for you today! At Bent Tree, our passion is for you to enjoy the freedom and fullness that comes from a real-life experience with Jesus. In short, we want you to experience Life — the Life of Christ — as an intimate, authentic, daily reality.

## **BRAND VISION STATEMENT**

*We want you and everyone to experience the Life of Christ.*

The brand vision statement expresses the main concept we hope people interact with any time they interact with Bent Tree. This is a great statement for you to memorize and incorporate into your ministry communication.

## **BRAND POSITIONING**

*Bent Tree encourages you to experience the freedom and fullness of Jesus in real life.*

A brand position is an implied or stated expectation for everyone involved, that this is what they will experience as a result of their participation. **This concept should pervade every ministry event, every contact, every interaction we architect for our congregation.**

The brand position will find its expression in every aspect of the discipleship wheel — through worship, growth, community, evangelism, service, and missions. When a person engages with every category of ministry event, they should walk away with one prevailing sense: “I experienced freedom and the fullness of Jesus in an authentic way.”

Let’s break down the brand position into discrete ideas that should show up in your ministry events and programs:

- **Experience:** This is not merely an intellectual exercise; it is a whole-person experience that comes through our community, our teaching, and our worship.
- **Freedom:** From the Law, from sin (full forgiveness), to a restored life in Christ.
- **Fullness of Jesus:** His love, his grace, and his continual presence, based on his work and his initiative.
- **Real life:** That is to say, authentic daily living — Bent Tree’s focus is often on how a believer’s union with Jesus affects daily living, and as it is done authentically before God and others.

## **BRAND PERSONALITY**

*A thinking, loving, authentic fellowship centered on Jesus.\*\**

When we think of Bent Tree as if it were a person standing in front of us, how would we describe that person? That is the function of the brand personality. For our practical purposes, this should guide how you perceive the organizational tone for communicating to the congregation and those beyond the walls of Bent Tree. This affects, most notably, the written tone (see this section in *II. Meet the style guide*).

**\*\* This is not a statement for public consumption; instead, it helps guide our thoughts as we seek perspective on our organization.**

## **BRAND AFFILIATION**

*Real people depending on Jesus.\*\**

Regardless of how you feel about the word 'real' (out-dated, pretentious, over-stated), the idea is that of *authenticity*. If a crowd of ten thousand people stood before the “person” of Bent Tree, who are the ones that would rise up and join us? The brand affiliation answers that. This is our tribe. The rest will feel more at home in someone else’s tribe.

**\*\* This is not a statement for public consumption; instead, it helps guide our thoughts as we seek perspective on our organization.**

## II. Meet the brand style guide

A brand style guide is the foundational building block for visually and verbally conveying the brand concepts. This style guide represents “running lanes” for everything that the Communication Team produces for Bent Tree. By consistently applying these brand standards, a strong sense of Bent Tree’s organizational personality emerges.

### SPEAKING OF BENT TREE

There are a variety of ways we can talk about our church. The preferred name is simply “Bent Tree.” But since Bent Tree is also the name of a neighborhood in north Dallas, occasionally it becomes necessary to indicate that we are speaking of “Bent Tree Bible,” not the neighborhood. In rare occasions, typically for official documents, we will use the formal name “Bent Tree Bible Fellowship.” In general, it is best to avoid abbreviating it to “BT” since that misses an opportunity to verbally reinforce the brand and the name.

### USING THE LOGO

It’s important to remember that the brand is not merely the logo, fonts, and colors. The brand starts in the concepts discussed in the previous section. From there, the visuals flow. For example, since Life in Christ is a core brand concept, the brand color green is suitable, since that color is often associated with life.

That being said, the logo is typically the most dense form of the brand, where we imbue all the brand concepts in the hopes that the visual association will remind people of their positive experiences with us.

The practice of professionally maintaining logo standards conveys a strong sense of the brand, which creates a strong social association for people who come into contact with our church.

*Logo: Global*

The primary style is full color, but it also includes black versions and white versions.





*Logo: Campus-specific*

These are to be used in places where the specific location or campus is in consideration. But in most cases, the global “experience Life” logo is to be used in Bent Tree communication.





*Scaling and Proportions*

When using the logo, please maintain the correct proportions so that the logo appears the same every time you use it. In most programs, enlarging or reducing the logo, (while maintaining the correct proportions), is done by holding down the SHIFT key and dragging the corner of the image.



**BRAND COLORS**

The primary Bent Tree brand colors are the following:

-  Dark Green – Pantone (PMS) 364. Hex code: 4a7729
-  Dark Brown – Pantone (PMS) 439C. Hex code: 453536

For a complete treatment on branded colors, including secondary colors, see the next section, “Visual Design Elements.”

**BRAND FONTS & USES**

Gotham and Router are the brand fonts, which match the Bent Tree logo. You can find these on the Shared Drive, under “Brand Assets.”



Gotham is the primary font — it works well as both a header text and as a body text. In the documents you create for your ministry, this is the best font for you to use.

## **Heading text (Gotham Bold, 16 pt.)**

Body text (Gotham Light, 11 pt.)

The other font used in the logo is Router Book Italic. It is a tricky font, and typically should not be used as body copy. It is best used in short headings (as it has been used in this document)

*Subheading (Router Book Italic, 11 pt.)*

The Communications Team will also use Bebas Neue for subheadings:

## **SUBHEADING (BEBAS NEUE, 16 PT.)**

Since all of these are san serif fonts, when the Communications Teams needs a serif font, we will use Mercury Text G4 (this font), and Hoeffler Titling:

*Serif Titles (Hoeffler Titling, Semibold Italic, 16 pt.)*

Serif body text (Mercury Text G4, pt. 11)

## **LAYOUT & PHOTOGRAPHY THEMES**

When the Communications Team does a layout or selects photography, the following are guidelines for where we begin.

*Visual Concepts:*

- **Alive.** We want to celebrate life! In our visuals, they will reflect livelihood and dynamic motion.
- **Free.** We want to reflect freedom. The most basic way we do this is by leaving white space.

*Visual Textures:*

- Wood
- Stone
- Leaves
- Rivers

 <b>ON-BRAND DESIGN ELEMENTS</b>	
<h1>COLORS</h1>	
<b>PRIMARY</b>	<b>SECONDARY</b>
	
<b>HEX VALUES</b>	
	
<b>FONTS</b>	
<b>Gotham</b>	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890
<b>BEBAS NEUE</b>	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ1234567890
<b>Mercury G4</b>	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890
<b>Router <i>Italic</i></b>	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890
<b>Hoefler Titling</b>	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

## WRITTEN TONE

Per the brand personality, written tone will reflect an organization which is *a thinking, loving, authentic fellowship centered on Jesus*.

- **Thinking.** Our writing will be intellectually stimulating. The 2016 survey of the Carrollton campus revealed that the average person at that campus has at least a bachelor's degree, with many having completed graduate and post-graduate work. Big words and big ideas are ok, but we will avoid stuffy, overly-academic language.
- **Loving.** There should be warmth in the way we express our big ideas — highlight relationships, speak positively of people in specific ways, share your care for the people in the congregation.
- **Authentic.** We don't have all the answers, and we don't have it all figured out. We fail often and openly, knowing that God's grace is our security. This is a crucial element in all our writing, and provides a necessary balance for the "thinking" component.
- **Centered on Jesus.** The authenticity in our writing should lead naturally and consistently to the sufficiency of the work of Jesus on our behalf.

## AP STYLE HIGHLIGHTS

Every piece produced by the Communications Team will go through the filter of the AP style. This style was selected since it is a widely-read style (used by most news sources), and it suites promotional content well. If you are unsure about how something should be spelled, abbreviated, punctuated, or capitalized, consult the AP style guidebook at [www.apstylebook.com](http://www.apstylebook.com)

The only exception we make to the AP style is the use of the serial comma:

Instead of:

*I like to eat apples, bananas and oranges.*

Write:

*I like to eat apples, bananas, and oranges.*

Some highlights from the AP style that will be useful for you to know are as follows:

- **Time notation.** The correct abbreviations are **a.m.** and **p.m.**
- **Ordinals.** 'First' versus '1st,' 'August 20' versus 'August 20th.' When writing out dates, we do not use ordinals — it is simply August 20. When order/placement are important, we do not abbreviate like '1st' but rather spell out 'first.'
- **Capitalization of roles and titles.** If, for example, we say that our senior pastor is Pete Briscoe, his *role* is not capitalized. But if we ask if someone heard the sermon by Senior Pastor Pete Briscoe, his *title* would be capitalized. (Yep, that's why we're here, folks — let the grammar nerds handle this one.)

- **Capitalization of the divine pronoun.** This might be the hardest rule to follow, because many of us learned to capitalize this in school. According to AP style, we will **not** capitalize pronouns that refer to God. So instead of writing, “I love Jesus because He saved me,” it would be “I love Jesus because he saved me.”<sup>1</sup> Don’t worry, modern-day Bible translations do the same thing, too (including NIV, NET, and the KJV!).
- **‘Gospel’ versus ‘gospel’.** Capitalize Gospel when referring to the book of the Bible (Gospel of Mark) but lowercase gospel when referring to the message of Christ.
- **‘Bible’ and ‘biblical’.** Capitalize the noun (Bible) but lowercase the adjective (biblical)
- **‘God’ and ‘godly’.** Capitalize God but lowercase the adjective referring to people.
- **‘Christ,’ ‘Christian,’ ‘Christ-like’.** Capitalize it all! Easy!
- **The Holy Spirit.** Pronouns referring to the Holy Spirit are to be personal, not impersonal (instead of ‘it’ use ‘he’)

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<sup>1</sup> Go here for a more complete discussion of the issue: <https://support.biblegateway.com/hc/en-us/articles/228180527-Why-aren-t-pronouns-referring-to-God-capitalized-in-some-Bibles-> and <https://blog.logos.com/2017/06/stop-capitalizing-pronouns-referring-god/>

### **III. Assess goals and metrics**

These two things are often overlooked in event promotion. Sometimes, in the desire to simply promote your event, the need for articulating goals and measuring effectiveness is forgotten. Before you make your request for event/ministry promotion, please consider the following goals and measures of effectiveness:

#### **YOUR MINISTRY PLAN & PRIORITIES**

How does this event fit into the larger ministry plan for this year? This will largely determine the level to which your event is promoted. If your event falls under one of the identified priorities for this year, you are more likely to have a lot of promotion. However, if it is not an identified priority, the Communications Team will “right-size” your promotion package so it hits your target demographic most effectively.

#### **EVENT PARTICIPATION**

This will be the best metric for seeing how well the word got out, even though attendance is not directly correlated with promotional efforts (the subject matter of the event is typically the determining factor). Before you meet with the Communications Team, take time to think through how many people you hope will attend your event. This will be a helpful part of the conversation as we work through which avenues will hit your target audience best. In addition, if this is a repeating event, we would hope to see recurring sign-ups as well as new attendees.

#### **ONLINE CONVERSATIONS**

If your promotion involves social media posts, think through what, if any, conversations you want to generate around your event. Do you want to use a question to promote beforehand? Do you want to do a live post during your event and answer questions or give “shout-outs”? Do you want to generate conversation after the event to keep people thinking? This, too, will give feedback on the effectiveness of mass communication promotions.

#### **“ECHOES”**

As discussed in the section for Brand Promise, when a person engages with your ministry event, they should walk away with one prevailing sense: “I experienced freedom and the fullness of Jesus in an authentic way.” If you hear participants echoing this sentiment, then promotion was a success, and the brand promise has been fulfilled! (And, of course, a ministry goal was met.)

#### **NEXT STEPS**

One of the most important things you can take into consideration as plan your event is this: “After my event is over, what will I recommend they take part in next?” In between church events, real life happens. Think through what resources, relationships, and/or next events you will present to your participants for their continued growth **as they leave your event**. (If you fail to do this, the participants get a sense of “dropping off the map” of our pastoral care.)

## IV. Consider the people in your ministry

### CAMPUSES

Each city, town, and suburb has its own unique style, its own expectations, and its own communication needs. The goal of this Communication Strategy is to balance standardization of brand concepts and central service offerings with each campus' need for contextualization of the message to its people.

The three locations in consideration in this strategy are as follows: Carrollton, Frisco, and the Third Ward in Milwaukee.

### GENDER

Men and women, moms and dads, grandmothers and grandfathers, brothers and sisters — gender affects how a person perceives their world and their needs, so this will also be a factor in formulating the strategy.

### AGE

A church serves all ages, from birth to death. This is a wide swath of people and perspectives. The age divisions we will consider will be along these lines:

- **Child:** 0–5, 6–12
- **Teen:** 13–18
- **Adult:** 18–22, 23–32, 33–42, 43–64, 65+

### STAGE

There are several stages that can be considered in a person's life. For our purpose here, we will consider the following stages:

- **Student:** Child, teen, college-aged.
- **Married:** Young married, seasoned married, mature married.
- **Single:** Young single, seasoned single, mature single.
- **Career:** Young professional, seasoned professional, mature professional.
- **Parent:** Parent of littles, parent of kids, parent of teens, empty nester, grandparent.

### CULTURAL STATUS

It would be dangerous for us to assume that all of our congregants are homogenous, economically or culturally. And as we seek ethnic diversity, cultural background must be considered. As we

navigate the reality of generational diversity in our various congregations and campuses, how do we ensure that the many voices represented are given time to speak?

In addition, immigration status must be considered, especially for Bent Tree en Español. Are they first-generation immigrants, or second or third? What conditions brought them the U.S.?

## **APPLICATIONS**

So what is the best way to reach a 65-year-old empty nester male in the Third Ward? How is it different from a 16-year-old high school female in Frisco? This is where we bring in your campus-specific communication strategy, which will be discussed with each campus lead team.



## V. Identify components for your campaign

At this step in your process, you have come to the point where you are going to contact the Communications Team about your project for a consultation meeting (see next section, VI. *Submit your request*). Before your meeting, you should look through the avenues for mass marketing available for use, to get a sense of what is offered and what the parameters are. The Communications Director and Project Manager will advise you on which ones are best to use as you all work through your overall communication strategy for event promotion.

### **\*\* READ FIRST: THE PROOFING PROCESS**

After you have met with us and submitted your final content in Wrike, be prepared to engage with us through the proofing process. Your participation in Wrike offers you greater visibility on the progress of your project, facilitates your questions/concerns getting answered quickly, allows us to correct any mistakes or missteps as your vision unfolds, and gives us a platform to deliver your final product on time.

We take seriously the proper stewardship of the church's resources, and the proofing process helps us prevent waste. In a typical year, we throw away hundreds of dollars worth of print pieces (either over-ordering or missteps in proofing). Please be prepared to engage intentionally in the proofing process. (For more on the process of submitting your projects, see section VI. *The request process*.)

### **GUIDING A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**

The people in our church are individuals, each on their own spiritual journey. It is broader than their attendance to your event — it spans across a variety of needs and opportunities. The Communications Team seeks to facilitate the overall user experience for all of Bent Tree's discrete audiences, in order to craft a constant stream of touchpoint for a healthy, connected spiritual journey. We do this by guiding and directing ministries, creating for them promotional materials that clearly explain a person's next step in their spiritual journey while maintaining consistency of brand standards.

### **PRINT MEDIA**

Depending on your campus, the Communications Team can offer three main avenues for print materials: bulletin, flyers, and mailers.

*Bulletin*

A bulletin is available to each campus, and must have content that changes at regular intervals. In that bulletin, your ministry can request to have your event promoted. The first stage is communicating with your campus pastor to discuss the overall strategy for what gets promoted in the bulletin.

All bulletins use the same shell of content. It will be slightly modified for each campus to fit unique needs. **If your campus would like to start using a bulletin for the first time, please schedule a consultation with the Communications Team, and plan for at least 6 weeks of production time before you expect to use it on a Sunday** — 4 weeks to finalize the new design, and 2 weeks to input your event info, so we are on a cycle that stays ahead of the curve. This meeting can be scheduled by visiting [benttree.org/wrike](http://benttree.org/wrike). Once there, choose your campus. At the top of the pop-up box, click on “request a meeting.”

*Flyers: Event promotion or ministry detail*

These are good for use within the congregation, specifically for handing out on a Sunday. The Communications Team typically creates flyers in either 4.5x7 inches (think Connection Corner size) or 4x6 inches (sometimes called “rave cards”), and they can be one-sided or two-sided. Final content is required before you make your request.

In addition to event promotion flyers, the Communications Team can also create ministry detail flyers. These can be part of a welcome packet for new guests, or a ministry overview card for your ministry team.

*Mailers: Letters or advertisements*

If you seek to communicate with your ministry’s participants by mailing a letter, the Communications Team can assist you in the editing process, and we can help you order any special paper or envelopes. We can assist you with the mailing process, as well. For letters, there is typically an additional fee with the printer for stuffing, sealing, addressing, and mailing. Please discuss this option with the Project Manager if you would like us to provide this service.

When seeking to advertise your ministry event or campus, postcard-type mailers are the most traditional way to reach out to the community. The Communications Team will assist you in the design of the mailer, the messaging/copy for the mailer, and will work with the mail vendor to acquire addresses. This will come out of your ministry’s budget line with the Communications Team, unless this expenditure was requested and approved as part of your ministry’s portion of the Communications Team’s budget for that year.

NOTE: For a mailer campaign to be effective, it requires multiple mailings — three at minimum, but professionals recommend six mailers. One mailer will not be an effective use of funds. Also, Return

on Investment (ROI) is very difficult to gauge with mailers — it is extremely difficult to know if a person showed up because of a mailer or because of another avenue. Finally, mail is expensive. One mailer for 2,000 people (about one neighborhood) costs about \$3,000. A more cost effective option to consider would be paid advertisement on social media or SEO keyword ads (Google AdWords). See that section below.

### **DIGITAL SIGNAGE (SLIDES)**

This is the technical term for the slides that run on the televisions in the lobby. Digital signage is the simplest way to get your event in front of the congregation. This is the most common component of a communication package for promoting your event or ministry. The Communications Team will use artwork for your event/ministry, and input key next-step info. You will need to request the time frame in which you want the slide to run, in increments of three weeks or less (any more than that becomes ineffective).

### **MASS EMAIL**

If you are sending out a promotional email to the entire congregation or to a subset demographic (e.g. “men over 50”), please contact the Communications Team. (We do not need to review your emails to your servants.) We will work with you to edit your content, format it into a mass email template, and send it out. Please be prepared to supply us with your list of targeted email recipients. Your ministry’s administrative assistant can work with the Database Manager to pull the list of people from the database. (If your target audience is unclear or too broad — like “all men” — please consult with the Communications Director for ways to narrow your focus.)

We will also advise you on frequency and form, to make sure that your efforts are best targeted, timed, and received by your audience. After the email goes out, we can also give you a report on open rate and click rate if you request.

### **TEXT MESSAGING CAMPAIGNS**

The Communications Team offers assistance in creating text message promotions — both single texts and multiple text campaigns. Texts can either be reminders pushed from the ministry or can be “text keyword for more” kinds of campaigns. This will be done in conjunction with the Database Manager, since the texts will go through Ministry Platform.

Texts are typically one small piece of the bigger equation. If you think a text reminder would be effective for your target demographic, please discuss this option with the Communications Team at the beginning of your communication campaign.

## WEBSITE

The Bent Tree website was built to serve five discrete target audiences: web visitor, first-time campus visitor, attendee, member, and servant/leader. The content is built out in two layers: “global” Bent Tree content, and campus-specific content.

When informing the congregation about your ministry event or program, these are platforms that the Communications Team can offer you:

- **Home page:** Reserved only for all-church, point-in-time campaigns (e.g. Faith Promise, sermon series, LifeSigns, Bible reading plans, Christmas).
- **Campus homepage:** Each campus page has 4–6 tiles (called ‘carousel ads’) where you can promote your ministry. This is the best avenue on the website for your ministry promotion.
- **Ministry detail page:** This is usually “evergreen” content, which displays content that is true of your ministry area throughout the entire year. You are responsible to let the Communications Team know when you need this updated. The Communications Team can also work with you to land on a shorter “vanity” link (e.g. [benttree.org/faith-promise](http://benttree.org/faith-promise))
- **Event registrations:** This happens through Ministry Platform, and pulls from the data input by the administrative assistant in your ministry area. If something is not working on the display side of things in My Bent Tree, please contact the Database Manager, who handles the source data in Ministry Platform. If you need a shorter “vanity” link, the Communications Team can assist with that; please put in a request.
- **Blog:** Stories are a great way to highlight what God is doing in your ministry! The Communications Team would love to work with you to in the writing, editing, and publishing process.
- **Editorial:** These are long-form articles, which explore applications to core teaching elements. (Find out more about the core teaching elements by contacting the Director).
- **Microsite:** This is a section of the website (still part of [benttree.org](http://benttree.org)) that functions as if it were independent of the rest of the site — it has its own navigation, its own color palette, and visual style. These are typically used for a larger event that requires both participant and servant registrations, event details, a promotion video, and event schedule (e.g. United Weekend, FADC, Journey to the Cross).

## SEO KEYWORDS / GOOGLE ADWORDS

Purchasing clicks and searches for keywords surrounding your ministry is a savvy, growing way to promote your campus and/or ministry to the community that meets them where they are — searching for things online!

Schedule a meeting at least *two months prior to your promotion start date* with the Communications Team to discuss what would be good keywords for your event, campus, or ministry. The meeting will also cover your target area (zip code), your budget threshold (which will determine the number of clicks), and the timeframe for your promotion. (Typically you want to promote your event for three weeks, and it takes time for the keyword to propagate on the internet.) The AdWords need to be ready to go no later than two weeks before you want to start using them.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Communications Team manages high-level event promotion through a variety of social media accounts. At present, since our primary audiences are on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, that is where the Communications Team focuses their efforts.

### *Church-wide (a.k.a., global) accounts*

On the “global” Bent Tree accounts, church-wide initiatives are promoted. These accounts also deliver content around sermon support and the Bent Tree distinctives of the Indwelling Christ, Shared Leadership, World Missions, Grace Lived Out, and Biblical Preaching. For this account, we will also proactively boost things on parenting, and personal stories from Pete (those typically get a lot of traction).

### *Campus-specific accounts*

The Communications Team also utilizes campus-specific social media accounts to facilitate event promotion at each campus. This can be requested by your ministry. We can also pay to boost a post, so it reaches more people (this, too, needs to be requested). Also, in order to simplify the discovery process for our congregants, we do not recommend a ministry create their own page. Rather, they should work with their campus team to find times and ways to gain followers on their campus page.

### *Your responsibility*

What the Communications Team *can't* do on your ministry's behalf is offer **event reports** — show pictures, tell stories, conduct follow-up after the event. Posting anything during or after the event is the **responsibility of each ministry**. (To find out more about how to get access to post on your campus's social media account, talk with your campus pastor.) We highly recommend that you appoint at least one social media advocate on your campus ministry team, who is a social media native, and will be strategic in gathering this content.

### *Ministry-specific communication*

If ministry-specific information is preferred for your goals on social media, please speak with the Communications Director to help you assess your goals and needs. The prescribed route is to start a **closed group on Facebook**, and invite your members into it. This prevents confusion when a new person tries to find Bent Tree on social media — imagine how many options they would have if every ministry had its own public page! The preferred naming convention for a new account or page is “Bent Tree (Your Ministry).” For example: Bent Tree Men’s Fellowship For your profile picture, use your ministry logo. For the page header image, please consult with the Communications Team.

If your people are not on Facebook (and you have confirmed this in conversation with them), then opening a unique account on Twitter or Instagram is permissible. Please use the naming convention “bt\_(ministry-name).” For example: @bt\_msm Be sure to indicate your campus in the profile description — “this is the account for the Middle School Ministry of Bent Tree’s Carrollton campus.”

#### *Content do’s & don’ts for campus-specific accounts*

The first question to ask before posting content is, “Where should I post this?” That has two answers: 1) Discuss with your campus pastor about a unified campus-wide priority of communication, 2) Know which channels your target audience prefers.

Whether you’re nervously staring at a blinking cursor or cavalierly ready to post anything that interests you, these concepts should shape what you consider to be appropriate, church-edifying content:

- **Do** post about to your upcoming events and how it will encourage your attendees.
- **Don’t** post why your event will be better than a similar event at another church.
  
- **Do** post devotional thoughts, encouraging people to take time in God’s Word.
- **Don’t** post political thoughts, encouraging people to take on your views and opinions.
  
- **Do** post pics and videos from your event, showing friends/family having a meaningful time.
- **Don’t** post personal pictures from your family’s big night out on the town.
  
- **Do** post invitations to serve or connect in a group, according to a campus-specific strategy.
- **Don’t** post about a specific group/class/servant role because the leader pressured you.

#### *Your personal social media accounts*

Though these rules do not apply exactly to your personal accounts, since you are not seeking to promote ministry events, similar standards exist. You are a representative of Bent Tree, even on each one of your social media accounts. Please avoid posts about politics and controversial social and theological issues during your time on staff. You can't choose when people see you as a representative of our organization and when they don't, so always assume you are being associated with Bent Tree.

#### *Frequency of posts*

[Need some help here... What do sources say??]

#### *Going Live*

On Facebook and Instagram especially, going live is a good way to get people to notice you. The best practice is to 1) Advertise it 24 hours in advance with a memorable picture, 2) Plan on an interesting location with an interesting/informative script, 3) Identify your camera-person and your moderator, 4) Plan to be live long enough to have a Q&A. **Please consult with the Communications Director before beginning this process, to get helpful tips on strategy, technique, and execution.**

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

If you want to have a professional photographer cover your ministry event, to help you promote it in subsequent years, the Communications Team can assist you in finding a contractor. The cost will come from your ministry area, and typically costs around \$250-500 for a two-hour event (this covers cost for the photographer to touch up and select the best photos).

## **VIDEO**

#### *Video announcements (Carrollton campus)*

If you are a part of the Carrollton campus ministry team, promoting your ministry or event through weekly video announcements is an option. Talk with your campus pastor seven-to-eight weeks in advance to get your event in the conversation. If your ministry's event is selected as one for video announcements, please submit the needed information in Wrike (pastors, your administrative assistant should know how to do this). Be prepared to write a summary with event info, a value statement, and a call to action (CTA). (The only CTAs for video announcements are to go to the Carrollton campus homepage or go to the lobby to talk with a person). The Communications Team will refine the copy according to the needs of the script.

#### *Video interview*

There will be times when you want to get time in front of the camera to tell the congregation about your ministry, event, or ask for volunteers. If and when that time comes, schedule a meeting with the Communications Team to discuss the idea at least two months in advance. We would love to dialog best practices and the best platform for your message. This conversation will likely involve your campus pastor as well. This meeting can be schedule by visiting [benttree.org/wrike](http://benttree.org/wrike). Once there, choose your campus. At the top of the pop-up box, you will see “request a meeting.” Click on it.

#### *Video stories*

From time to time, there are stories that happen in your ministry area that are noteworthy, unique, and clearly edifying for the entire church. These can be captured in the form of a story, with “b-roll” (footage of events happening under a voice-over), and multiple shots. This is an extended project, which takes two to four months. If you want to tell a story through video, you can start the conversation with the Communications Team. It will then shift to the Worship and Arts Team, who will assess if they have the bandwidth to work on the project.



## VI. Submit your request

### STEP 1. PLAN AHEAD

If you have walked through the content in the other sections of this booklet, you have done a lot of this already. The Communications Team seeks to maintain a workflow process that is easy for you and efficient for us. Since we serve a lot of ministries on a regular basis, creating small and large deliverables, certain timetables have been prescribed so that we can do our best work for you in light of all our other demands (see the chart below for details).

Help us help you! The Communications Team does their best creative work when there is time to be creative. For new projects or updating old projects, please set up a meeting three months in advance. Most promotional material should be ready to deploy 3-4 weeks before the event happens, and it typically takes us 4 weeks to work through production of a campaign. The sooner you talk with us, the more time you have to gather your materials before submitting your final content to us!

### STEP 2. SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION

If you are starting a new project, or if you are updating the look and feel of a recurring event, your process begins with a consultation with the Communications Director and the Project Manager. That will help us align goals and tactics. This meeting can be schedule at [benttree.org/wrike](https://benttree.org/wrike). Once there, choose your campus. At the top of the pop-up box, click on “request a meeting.”

This meeting will provide a chance to dialog about your ministry priorities, your event goals and vision, and the tactics that will most effectively reach your audience with on-brand communication. **This is a consultation meeting; it does not constitute a request for the Communications Team.** After the meeting, you will have recommended action steps. It is your responsibility to work with your ministry administrative assistant (who is the designated liaison for the Communications Team) to discuss the exact recommendations you wish to act on. Your ministry admin will work with the Communications Team Project Manager to determine the assets we will need and the deadline(s) for delivery of your promotional materials.

### STEP 3. MAKE A SUBMISSION

The Project Manager is your primary contact for the progress of your project, and will be the person who stays apprised of the team’s workflow. The Project Manager utilizes our project management software to process all content and direct the team’s time/workflow. **All official requests will go to the Project Manager by means of the project management software.**

When you submit a request, **please be sure to submit final content**. If it is an event, **please be sure to have final date(s), time(s), and location**. This will save time and spare us confusion as we implement your project. If you submit incomplete content, it costs extra time and wasted effort for both parties. The Project Manager will work with the Administrative Assistant in your department to make sure all the pieces needed have been presented, and will discuss timelines for delivery.

#### STEP 4. PROOFING

Once you submit final content through Wrike, the Communications Team will go to work. The Project Manager remains your primary point of contact throughout the entire process, even though you might get proofs from other people on our team. How does this work? In Wrike we are set up for collaboration. **You will receive proofs in Wrike**, and you will be expected to offer feedback within that system. This shortens our turn-around time, and streamlines communication.

In a typical situation, the stages of proofing look like this:

- **Concept Proofs:** For a *new* or *updated* project, you will receive 3-5 concepts. Select the one concept you like the most, offer some feedback, and we will develop it further. (Note: If your project is *not* new or an update — or if you are working with a shortened time-line — only a formal proof is needed.)
- **Formal Proof:** A more refined version of the concept you liked will be sent to you. At this point, if you have changes, they should be minor. You will be asked to give final approval. If changes need to be made, we will re-submit your formal proof with changes, up to three times (though ideally this only happens once).
- **Approval:** Once you offer approval, we will move forward with implementing other components of your communication campaign (i.e. send to print, create graphics for other forms of media, etc.).

#### COMMUNICATIONS TEAM ROLES

In addition to the Communications Director and the Project Manager, the rest of the team consists of a Lead Graphic Designer (full-time), a Webmaster (part-time), a Social Media Coordinator (part-time), and a Copy Editor (part-time). The Project Manager will be your point person for your entire project. Please do not contact other members of the team directly, especially by email. This will confuse our process, and will slow down the implementation process. For many projects, a proof will be sent out from one of the team members through our project management software. Keeping your communication within the project management software means that the Project Manager can still stay updated on your project's progress.

## LEAD TIMES

As you plan ahead, please keep in mind the following lead times. Remember that these times indicate how long it takes our team to implement. Add to that any extra time before your event for promotion, and work your way backwards for the best time to submit your request.

**For all new campaigns/projects (includes graphics and social media), please meet with the Communications Director and Project Manager at least 3 months prior to first promotion.**

Item Requested (in increasing complexity)	Turnaround time
Blog post (editorial or story)	2+ weeks
Mass email (100 or more people, excluding volunteers)	2 weeks
Business card order (or reorder)	7-10 days*
Social media post	3-7 days
Web troubleshoot/question	1-5 days**
Flyer/card (new card, includes design/layout) (4x6 or 5x7, typically)	2-3 weeks
Flyer/card reorder (moderate edits – 10 words or more)	5-7 business days
Flyer/card reorder (very minor to no edits)	1-3 days
Bulletin request (with existing bulletin layout)	1-2 weeks
Web updates (minor: 25-100 words, no changes to layout)	1-2 weeks
Name badges (in-house print and cut)	3-7 days
Name badges (printed by outside vendor)	2 weeks
SEO keyword advertising (includes consultation)	2 weeks
Text message keyword	1-2 weeks
Text message campaign	4 weeks before start
Photography event coverage	2-3 weeks
Digital signage (comes with graphic package, see below)	
New graphics package or redesign	3-5 weeks
Tee-shirt reorder	2-3 weeks
Tee-shirt order (new design)	4-6 weeks
Other printed items with new design (mugs, cups, air fresheners, etc.)	2-4 weeks***

Item Requested (in increasing complexity)	Turnaround time
Other printed items with existing design (e.g. logo, ministry icon)	1–3 weeks***
Video announcement submission (Carrollton only)	5–6 weeks
Website: microsite/complex landing page	3 weeks–3 months (based on complexity)
Website: ministry landing page (simple)	1–3 weeks
Book edit, layout, and print (new): saddle stitch (under 20 pages)	2–3 weeks
Book edit, layout, and print (new): spiral bound (20-70 pages)	3–8 weeks
Mailer (includes addresses, layout, and copy)	4–6 weeks (to inbox)
“Talking head” video/interview	2–4 weeks
Explainer video: animated (or equal-sized animation project)	2–3 months
Ministry highlight story video	2–3 months

\*Bent Tree gets a significant price reduction for each additional box of business cards ordered. Occasionally, we may need to wait until more boxes are needed.

\*\*May take longer depending on solution.

\*\*\*Depends on vendor; delivery times may vary.