Good Looking and a Great Personality:
Defining Your Church's External Identity

Every church has a personality. It's as impossible for a church not to have a personality as it is for a person not to have a personality. Even "no personality" describes a kind of (very uninteresting) personality. There is no neutral ground. If your church's personality is ill defined internally or externally, you want to remedy that. God created people with personalities, and he created the Church as a collection of his personality-infused people. If your church's personality isn't engaging people, you're losing them.

What to avoid when identifying your personality:
Changing personalities when there is a change in audiences.
That's a disorder for individuals; let's consider it a disorder for churches too. Your personality is who you are regardless of audience or circumstance. Every external expression of your church should be consistent with the church's
internal identity.

Mistaking labels and trends for personality.
In business marketing, most product differences aren't remarkable enough to base a brand upon. Companies have become so adept at copying products and services that "newness" becomes only a short-term tactic for creating awareness. Churches often aren't much different when it comes to communicating who they are. Trends in church messaging abound. Distinguish yourself in a way that people can really connect to your message, not just common church marketing claims or labels that often mean little to unchurched people. The same holds true for marketing your "newness" as a church plant as your primary
distinguishing characteristic. Don't do it. Go deeper.

Focusing on traits that are hard to communicate externally.
Obviously your website and print material can't fully convey your church's
personality in a way that time with your people can. For this exercise, focus on the personality traits that will most accurately describe your church in print, online, and in other external messaging formats. Use words that clearly
communicate a specific tone and attitude.

Blanding down the brand to create mass appeal.
Bland is not a brand. Beware the temptation to polish your personality in order to please any and every audience. You may not offend anyone, but you may bore everyone. Don't play it so safe that you unnecessarily portray your church as bland.

→ **Complete the Church Personality Worksheet.**

Church Personality Worksheet

A) As you begin to identify your personality, imagine your church as a person. The combination of personality traits you identify must ring true for this person. The goal is to identify 4 or 5 traits that go together naturally.

B) List 8 to 10 potential personality traits of your church.
Examples: Formal, Informal, Missions-focused, Community-minded, Urban, Rural, Warm, Intellectual, Dialogue-driven, Teaching-driven, Traditional, Mainstream, Modern, Postmodern, Communal, Social, Warm, Accessible, Polished, Simple, Creative, Artistic, Expressive, Ambitious, Quiet, Loud, Fast-paced

C) The following questions will help you narrow your list to four or five traits that will effectively represent your church:

Do these traits realistically portray your church and its capacities?
Do they represent the current traits of the leadership of your church?
Do they represent the current members of your core group?
Will these traits appeal to your target audience?
Will these traits make sense to your target audience?
Do you have at least one personality trait that deals with communication?
For example, could you describe a recent sermon with the words you've chosen?

D) Narrow your list and write down the 4 or 5 personality traits that best describe your church. For each one, write a description that identifies how that trait is exhibited (specifically) by and in your church community.