COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

How Cypress Church should write, speak and communicate clearly and consistently in all mediums

BASIC INFORMATION

All writing should be:

- Accurate – Make sure the facts are correct, double check names, numbers and spellings
- Brief – Get to the point quickly
- Engaging – Use fiction approach to non-fiction (make it interesting). Leave readers with something to remember
- Informal – Copy should reflect our leadership and church personality. Use humor where appropriate. Have fun. Avoid use of second person narrative as much as possible. Avoid local inside jokes and stories since most writing will likely be used at all campuses.
- Informative – Find ways to reflect our mission and vision statements

PUNCTUATION, SPELLING and GRAMMAR

Common errors that occur in copywriting

- Apostrophe – Avoid using apostrophes in plurals. Example: Cds, URLs
- Bullets – Use consistent types of bullets in publications
- Capitalization – Avoid all caps, except for emphasis. It gives the impression of YELLING. Capitalize pronouns when referencing the Deity. Examples: God, Father, Holy Spirit, He, Him
- Commas – In lists of three items or more eliminate the comma before and/or. Example: She has books, tape and paper.
- Exclamations – Use sparingly!!!!!!
- Hyphens – Do not hyphenate words at line breaks. Never hyphenate Web site addresses.
- Numbers – Spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for 10 and above
- Periods – One space after periods and at the end of sentences. Omit periods in incomplete sentences.
- Titles – Do not use courtesy titles. Example: The Rev. Ken Murphy. Instead, use “Pastor Ken” or just “Ken”
- Punctuation – The period and comma always go inside the quotation marks. The dash, the semicolon, the question mark and the exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.
- Abbreviations – Avoid using abbreviations
- Sentences – Choose active versus passive voice
- Titles – Italicize titles to increase readability
- Dates – Don’t abbreviate. Don’t use “rd” or “th” Example: May 23, 2014
- Email – Italicize and lowercase email addresses in sentences. Never hyphenate email addresses
• Phone – Phone numbers should be separated with dashes
• Times – Write times consistently. Use am/pm lowercase without periods. Example: 4:30pm
• Web – Use lowercase for all web addresses. Do not use “www” before a web address.

PROOFING* & EDITING
Even the best written copy will turn off readers if it includes errors

• Accuracy – Double check dates, times and names.
• Audience – Is the copy simple, and does it communicate to our people and guests? Does it communicate to first time visitors?
• The Basics – Are all the details of the Who, What, Where, When, Why & How included in the copy?
• Style – Is the copy consistent with the voice and style of writing of Cypress Church?
• Spelling – Double check spelling. Have someone who is not familiar with the document check for spelling.
• Terminology – Does the copy contain correct Cypress terminology? Examples: Cypress Church, Dublin campus, Alton Darby campus

*It is important to proof your copy before it is published and have at least one other person, preferably who is not familiar with the text, proof for errors.

WEB SITE
cypresschurch.tv

Direct all promotions traffic through cypresschurch.tv. This creates a single, unified view of the church.

Always design under the context of low-to-no maintenance. Automate whenever possible. If you can’t maintain it, please don’t implement it. Abandoned or rarely-updated content is unprofessional.

Design from the outside in, not the inside out. Make it user-centric not organization-centric. Build around services, not the organization chart. Fairness and/or equal promotions for all ministries is not a communications priority.

Design for re-use and reach. Recycle existing information and provide multiple entry points for the same information.

Reduce noise and keep it simple.

Facilitate connections. Everything should be relational and interactive.

WRITING* FOR THE WEB
Web copywriting is a first impression of Cypress Church

Use the inverted pyramid style (e.g. Information/content flows top to bottom from most important to least important)
*People read information on the web much differently than they do printed communication. Instead of reading each line, they tend to scan the page for important content. It’s vital that our web copywriting still communicates to them.

**VOICE MAIL & EMAIL**

Make sure your personal interactions still carry the Cypress brand

Your voice mail message should include your name and title or area of ministry at Cypress. All voice mail messages are to be returned within 24-48 hours. Staff cell phone numbers are confidential. Never give out staff cell phone numbers without permission.

Member/attendee information is also confidential.

All email should be returned within 24-48 hours.

Email signatures should be consistent with all staff. Include your name, title, cypresschurch.tv (with hyperlink) and office phone number with extension (cell optional). No images please.

Example:

Susan Knight
Director of Communications
cypresschurch.tv
Office: 614-878-8192 ext. 249

**PROMOTIONS**

All ministry opportunities we have at Cypress Church encourage people to take their next steps in their relationship with Christ.

It’s important to communicate clearly everything that is needed to make events successful. Complete the following steps for every event, class, team opportunity or other announcement.

- Complete a Communication Request Form at cypresschurchresources.tv/#/forms/communication-requests
- Think about what you’re trying to communicate to people while you’re entering the information in the fields. The information you enter in this section will be used to communicate the who, what, when, where and why about your event.
• Tuesday at noon is the deadline for weekly promotions
• All Communication/Promotion requests will be considered for announcements in the following vehicles based on timeliness and scope: Cypress Weekly News, worship card, platform, web site, digital sign and billboard. If you have specific thoughts or ideas of promotion methods, include them in the Communication request form. A request for a specific communication vehicle (i.e. platform) is not a guarantee that your announcement will be made via that vehicle. Promotions are not based on fairness; promotions are based on ministry priority.

*All promotions for any event, on campus and off campus, are coordinated through the Communication Team. Always contact us first.

**MEDIA RELATIONS**
Effectively establishing & maintaining relationships with the public audience

For each targeted event or audience, the Communication Team helps facilitate and implement strategies to make it run smoothly for media access. A typical plan for publicizing an event may include:

- Coordinate any pre-event publicity
- Assemble all event information
- Distribute press release and media packets (if applicable) to comprehensive media list

Other Media Relations

- Writing/editing
- Develop relationships with media contacts
- Media pitching and Media alerts/press releases
- Media distribution list maintenance
- Special events
- Editorial requests

If you have something you consider news worthy and would like publicity, please contact the Communication Team. Please remember that no news releases should be sent out, interviews conducted or endorsements provided without first consulting with the Communication Team.

*If you are contacted by a media outlet, contact the Communication Team before you respond

Thanks!

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