

The One-Page Media Budget Case

Walk into your board meeting with an answer, not a request.

Nearly half of pastors say the economy is hurting their church. Most media budget requests fail for one reason: they ask for a thing, and boards fund outcomes. Fill this in before your next meeting.

The rule this whole sheet is built on

Never ask for a budget for a thing. Ask for a budget for an outcome, and name how you will know if it worked. That single change wins more approvals than any argument about quality.

1. The problem we already agree is real

State it in one sentence, using a number the board already knows.

2. The one outcome I want

Not "more engagement." Something like: more people give in December than last December.

3. How we will measure it

One number, checked on one date. Write the date.

4. What it costs, and what it replaces

Boards say yes faster when something else comes off the list.

What To Cut, and In What Order

When money is tight, do fewer things at full quality.

Separate the two budgets hiding under one label

- **Keeping the lights on:** Livestream, sound, slides, subscriptions. Serves people already coming. Judge it on: is it reliable, and is it the cheapest reliable option?
- **Moving the mission:** A campaign film, a story that gets shared, an invite piece. Reaches people not yet coming. Judge it on: did it do the one job we gave it?

The question that settles most arguments

"If this disappeared tomorrow, what specifically would stop happening?"

Clear answer, keep it. Fuzzy answer, that is a strategy problem, not a budget problem.

"We would post less" is an activity. No board should fund an activity.

Cut in this order

- **1. Subscriptions nobody named.** Pull 12 months of charges. Most churches find two or three nobody can explain.
- **2. Volume for its own sake.** Posting five times a week because a consultant said so is the most expensive habit in church communication, paid in staff hours.
- **3. Gear that solves a want.** If the current camera works, a new camera is not a ministry decision.
- **4. Anything with no named owner.** If nobody is responsible for a channel, it is already half dead. End it formally.

Notice what is not on that list: telling stories about real people. That is usually last to cut, because it is the only line that directly helps people give, show up, and invite someone.

Weak ask vs strong ask

Weak: "We would like to budget for a video this year."

Strong: "40% of our giving comes in the last six weeks of the year. Today we explain that season with a letter. I want one film used in every service, every email, and the giving page, and I want to compare December to last December."

Fund the outcome, not the equipment.

Made by Kolstad Media. We build films for churches and nonprofits across the Portland area and beyond.