

Digital'ew

The Ultimate (Unofficial) **Guide to Livestreaming**

Learn how to master social media's most engaging feature



Table of Contents

	Intro	STEP 6	The Irresistible Offer
STEP 1	Establish an Effective Dialogue	STEP 7	Incentivize Reactions and Shares
STEP 2	Create Engaging Content	STEP 8	Production Quality
STEP 3	Streaming At The Right Time	STEP 9	Livestream Series
STEP 4	Evergreen Content	STEP 10	Your Content Strategy
STEP 5	Promote It Like an Event		

Intro

Live streaming has become, and is becoming, more and more popular across social media platforms. Alongside Twitter's live streaming application Periscope, platforms like Facebook and Instagram introduced live streaming late 2015 and 2016. Live streaming provides a unique and powerful way to connect with your audience on social media, taking the conversation beyond the Comment box and into a live engagement.

Those same platforms that are adopting livestreaming are pushing it heavily within their platforms because they understand that the value of what it brings to the table. Incorporating livestreaming into your digital strategy means more reach on your social media channels, higher returns on time invested, better audience insights, better notifications (ever notice whenever someone starts a livestream to get a notification?) and happy engagement algorithms that prioritize your content over other pages in your audience's stream.

Livestreaming can be a great tool, but in many cases we have found that it can also be a church/ministry/non-profit's worst enemy. Livestreaming done poorly can hurt you more than it can help. Bad streams with no relevant content, no dialogue and no structure can actually drop your engagement. We have seen this to be the case first hand many times. Keep in mind that you might not be able to apply every point in this manual – that's ok! This is meant to be a comprehensive approach to guiding your livestreams and help you build up your digital strategy. Pick and choose as needed to make your livestreams better –

implement what you can do well and avoid the things you can't (for now).

If you're going through this and find questions or a gap in understanding that you want to learn more about, feel free to reach out to me at akande@digitalpew.com. I love hearing from leaders from all different churches, ministries and non-profits.



STEP
1

Establish an effective dialogue

One of the biggest issues I see with churches, ministries and even non-profits doing livestream video is that they don't have a dialogue with the audience. Many times a livestream will startup, I'll get notified, I'll hop on to see what is going on and sit through about 3 minutes of the livestream host fumble around with the settings, seeing the comments and establishing the conversation. And to clarify, having a dialogue doesn't mean that you get on a livestream and ask "How is everyone doing?" or field questions in an unstructured way from your audience; a dialogue is a structure and standard that you hold your engagement to. Here are the key takeaways that you should have for establishing a dialogue and starting a conversation with your livestream audience;



Have a schedule and stick to it

If you get on the livestream and there are only a handful of people on the stream, keep it moving. You can take small 10 – 15 second breaks as needed, but make sure you're delivering the content, as scheduled, to the current audience. You are doing a disservice to the people who are actually interested by making them wait for the engagement you promised.

Structure questions and comments

During any formal presentation, there is a Q&A period where audience members are able to ask questions and the presenters can field them. Every livestream isn't going to be a formal presentation, but there is value in making sure that you have set times to answer questions and dialogue with the audience without breaking away from the objective of your livestream to do it. Again, this can be done informally, but don't get caught in the weeds of answering questions or reading every single comment that comes in.

Keep your schedule flexible

If you get some great questions and it leads to a discussion that you can use to provide value for your audience, do it! There is nothing wrong with keeping a hot topic in conversation as long as it contributes to the livestream and doesn't detract from the primary focus of why you started this livestream to begin with. A good conversation can be a great way to keep your audience engaged and drive increased interaction.

Keeping a dialogue is very important; the conversations that you start during your livestream can lead into future content, topics and help shape your livestream strategy down the line.

STEP
2

Create compelling, engaging content

On Facebook I am friends with a lot of church leaders and I follow a lot of ministries, and without fail, every Sunday when I get on Facebook I see a half dozen of church service streams. At least. And these aren't incredibly well shot or produced livestreams for the most part. In many cases they are shot on a smartphone in poor video quality, with poor audio quality, from the back of the church and go on for the whole 2 hour service. Candidly speaking, I'm not interested in the content at all. I will be the first person to advocate for putting church sermons on the web and I think that platforms like Facebook can be incredible opportunities to reach your church community (and non church-goers too), but without adhering to some guidelines, you are wasting your efforts. Time is valuable and if your content isn't compelling, I can spend it elsewhere. Everyone's content is different, but here are some quick questions to consider when developing your next livestream content effort;

✓ Does the video look good? Smartphones can be great for livestreaming, so don't dismiss it. In this article I discuss how to get a killer look for livestream videos and break down the costs.

✓ Can they hear the presenter clearly?

✓ How will the presenter engage with them?

✓ Is my community familiar with the topic?

✓ Can the livestream be repurposed as a video to upload?

✓ How long will the livestream be?



STEP 3

Stream at the right time of day, for the right amount of time

I mentioned in the last post that on Sundays I am at home on Facebook for typically a couple of hours during the day. The reason being is that I don't work and I go to church on Shabbat (Saturday). Using the same example from the previous point, it always crosses my mind as I'm seeing these livestreams populate my Facebook feed – "Do they know that their core audience is likely at their own local church right now?" This isn't a problem that is exclusive to churches. Ministries and non-profits have to consider when their target audience is available during the day and what their social media habits, and entertainment habits, are like. 10:00 a.m. on a Tuesday morning might not make sense for some and might make perfect sense for others. Even if you plan on repurposing the livestream as uploading it as it's own video, the engagement and boost you will get from having a successful livestream will reflect positively in Facebook's (and Instagram's) algorithm. When you're scheduling your livestream, consider the following that could impact or siphon off your potential viewers;



Major holidays and events



Television debuts (TV Shows, Sports, etc.)



Community schedules (Bible studies, Church attendance, etc.)

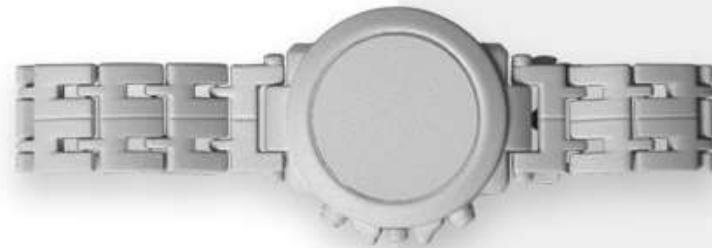


Time Zone



Social media metrics (What do the analytics say?)

Another helpful tip is to establish a consistent time that your audience can expect content from you. A friend of mine, Colton Wayan, publishes a new video content piece every Monday on YouTube which his audience expects. He has seen better view counts and audience responses since implementing his schedule. You can check out his Good Men Brotherhood channel [here](#).



Evergreen content: The power of replay value

One of the biggest appeals of livestreaming is all about capturing the 'now'. The level of exchange and interaction that livestreams, gives creators creates unique moments in time with their audience. There is something awesome about that. With all of the benefits of livestreaming, there is one that often goes unnoticed and that is the value of creating livestream content that is 'evergreen'. Evergreen content is content that can be shown to new audiences over and over while retaining its intrinsic value. It doesn't become less interesting or less relevant, in fact, it has the same effect for every new person that watches it. Some great examples of evergreen content pulled from livestreams are often conference videos, Q&A sessions and even live group discussions. Even if it is happening in the now, it can still be evergreen. While preparing for your next livestream, here are some things to consider to make sure that your content is as evergreen as possible;

✓ **Avoid putting the date in the title of your video** or mentioning it in your dialogue, lower thirds and anywhere else when possible. This won't be a huge issue for most people, but the more that content becomes dated, it can be perceived as less relevant or important.

✓ **Avoid trending topics that won't be relevant for your audience in a month's time.** This doesn't mean current events should be skipped out on, but if you are able to maintain an ongoing dialogue with your audience, focus on that. Don't get lost in the weeds that could become the 'now' of the livestream. Always keep in mind that your content needs to be relevant: building an entire marketing plan around the advent of the fidget spinner would be a bad idea, so don't do that with your livestream.

✓ **Repurpose older content during your livestream.** If you talked about something in the past, in a blog, article, video, etc. that really resonated with your audience, find a way to take that same information and graft it into your livestream. This will create content that your live audience will enjoy and engage with while still maintaining relevancy with your audience. If you have content that has performed great, there is nothing wrong with reviving it with a new twist!

✓ **Break your livestream into smaller videos to distribute and use as short form content for your community.** If someone doesn't have time to watch an entire livestream, even if it is already uploaded, break it into 2 -3 minute easy to watch clips, highlighting the best parts of the webinar. Taking it a step further you could break it down into 30 - 40 seconds clips and drive users to the livestream with each clip (or any other content). Facebook is notorious for users dramatically losing interest in videos after 10 seconds, so the shorter the better.

Take everything with a grain of salt; not all livestreams can be repurposed to be evergreen. Sometimes the 'now' of the livestream is what it is - there is nothing wrong with having a strategy that isn't evergreen or having content that isn't constantly repurposed at every opportunity. Treat your audience right, watch what they enjoy and develop your strategy around what they respond to, not around a goal of trying to milk their attention!

STEP
5

Promote it like an event

Your livestream is like a concert where everyone gets a front row seat – treat it as such! There is novelty in doing a spontaneous livestream, or not planning it out like we've outlined above, but in most cases you need to treat your livestream like a VIP event. When your livestream has great content, a solid dialogue and is happening right when your audience is available, your goal is to get them in the 'door' so to speak. Your livestream is valuable and they need to know that! Here are 8 solid steps to get your mindset in the right place for treating your livestream like the most valuable conference on the web (or at least to your audience)



Get a (relevant) Guest Speaker

If your audience isn't that interested in watching you, give them another reason to watch with a guest speaker. Guest speakers can bring a new dimension to your livestream as well as offering a ton of value for users watching. Keep in mind that your guest speaker will need to be relevant for your audience; your buddy who has no connection or expertise on the topic you're discussing won't make for a good guest speaker. A good question to ask is "What can my guest offer that I can't and how can I build on that?" Guest speakers can be brought in via webcam or be with you in person for the livestream session. I recommend getting this technology to help you facilitate your guest speaker livestreams. This can be a powerful way to get your audience's attention and bring them into your dialogue.

Highlight your livestream Topics

If you have a guest speaker, great, but even if you don't, the topics discussed will be one of the powerful drivers for users to participate in your livestream. As an account administrator (and leader), you understand what your audience likes the most, dislikes the most, engages with and have passion for. All things considered, you want to speak on topics that are going to draw them in – since you know what those topics are, showcase and promote them, listing the takeaways they will get from the livestream if they attend.

Use Facebook Audience Insights to get better reach

This is a pretty intense topic and I cover it in more detail in my article – 12 steps to become a Facebook Power User. Check it out to learn about creating audiences that are a part of your social media community and how to target the right groups of people.

Advertise and retarget your audience

Facebook allows you to do a lot of awesome things; one of the most powerful features of the Facebook and Instagram platform is to retarget people who have already interacted with your page content or advertisements. If someone has seen or interacted with your content, you can show them your advertisement again to keep your event top of mind. Retargeting is a pretty comprehensive topic and I cover more in my article mentioned above – 12 steps to become a Facebook Power User.

Start on time and end on time

I know I've already said this before, but it's worth stressing further. All great events have set in stone start times and end times. Respect that and you will respect your audience!

STEP
6

Create an irresistible offer for attendees

If someone is planning on joining your livestream it could be for a number of reasons. The same is true if they don't plan on joining. If you're having a hard time finding out why your livestreams aren't performing well or why your audience isn't as receptive as you'd like, create an offer that (in my godfather voice) they can't refuse! The offer doesn't have to be a drawing or some sort of giveaway that they have to enter. An offer can come in a lot of different forms, for example you could offer attendees;

- ✓ Exclusive insider information related to the topic being discussed
→ "My experience working 10 years in church media ministry"
- ✓ A resource guide that they can access on the web or download
→ "Check out this guide on becoming a Facebook Power User"
- ✓ Curated lists for products, services, websites, etc (whatever makes sense) that your audience would find valuable
→ "Here are the top 10 sermons I listen to in preparation for a big event"
- ✓ A sneak peek that only livestream members will be able to see
→ "Check out this promo clip for our upcoming ministry media resource"

These are some suggestions, but really an offer can come in all shapes and sizes depending on your community and their needs and wants.



STEP
7

Incentivize 'Reactions' and 'Shares'

When I'm talking about Reactions and Shares, what I really mean is engagement. Reactions and Shares aren't the only way that you can see or measure engagement, but they are a good place to start. Reactions and Shares help to get your livestream noticed to your audience's network. Every comment, smiling emoji and Share takes your livestream to your audience's timeline on Facebook where their friends and family can see what they are engaging in. The 'Reactions' or hearts on your livestream also show your audience, and their network, the nature of the content without them even hearing the dialogue. A stream of 'Angry' reactions might prompt someone to tune in to see what all of the fuss is about (hopefully you are getting 'Laughing' reactions though!). Here are some easy to do, non-pushy ways that you can incentivize 'Reactions' and 'Shares';



Perform a poll using 'Reactions' as a voting system

This is a great way to get an influx of engagement without having to ask for it specifically.

Perform a poll using 'Comments' as a voting system

This is similar to the option above, but with the comment section. Depending on your audience, one or the other might work better.

Ask questions and respond to comments off-cuff

Formal Q&As are important, but asking questions during a livestream and responding to 1 or 2 comments can serve as a way to get more people to comment and contribute to the conversation, even if it doesn't involve the moderator directly.

Tell your audience "Tag someone who might love this"

This is a straightforward request, but there is nothing wrong with it if you are offering valuable information that your community loves. They trust you and you can ask them to share it with 1 person who would find it interesting.

Tell your audience "If you are enjoying the content, be sure to Share it!"

Again, a straightforward request that no one will have a problem with (as long as they love your content). A rule of thumb though - don't make this request more than 2 times during a livestream that is 10 minutes or less.

STEP
8

Step up the production quality

Your smartphone camera and microphone won't cut it in most cases. Sometimes it might, but I recommend checking out some simple equipment you can buy to really elevate your livestream experience. I cover this in more detail in my blog titled "[Million Dollar Livestream on a Budget](#)"

Check it out to see how we do our Livestream sessions and put our content in the hands of the right people.



STEP

9

Start an event (livestream) series

Setting up a livestream event series (or web series rather) is a great way to engage your audience in relevant topics and build on past livestreams. Like I mentioned above in the evergreen content piece, not all content can last forever; web series allows you to revisit or build on topics that were already popular and provide a fresh take on new information. Great examples of this are often seen on, what I call, talking head livestreams that happen once a week. Each week there will be a set time and set length for their livestream and they will duplicate the format from week to week while changing out key discussion areas. The focus, format and the goals of the livestream don't change, only the content.

This approach requires a significant time investment and understanding of your audience.

I'm including it because I want to give you an idea of what this could look like, but if you don't have the bandwidth to do it correctly and consistently, I would defer to some of the other points in this manual to optimize your livestreaming.



Have a content strategy in place

There is a ton of great information in this manual, but there is something that I need to make abundantly clear – livestreaming should be a part of your digital strategy, not your complete digital strategy. Even if you follow every rule in this manual, you will fall short if you don't have a solid foundation to build your livestreaming, and other social media efforts, on top of. So many times in churches, ministries and non-profits, the basics of digital strategy are entirely missing. Without those basics, you will fall short of your goals and not even know why. Digital Pew was our solution to this problem that we see so often. Here are some of the basics that you should have to make sure that you are maximizing all of your efforts, livestreaming or not;

- ✓ **Audience:** Do you know exactly who you are trying to reach and target with your efforts? Do you know their favorite places to eat, hobbies, TV shows, preachers, etc.? There is a level of detail that you need to have in order to understand your audience and build that relationship. If you don't know anything about who you're talking to, how will you know what to talk to them about?
- ✓ **Goals:** What are you looking to accomplish with everything that you are doing? Consider your monthly, quarterly and annual goals for your efforts. What is the baseline for your efforts? How do we quantify success? What are the KPIs (key performance indicators) driving your decision making? Knowing where you need to go is important in starting the journey.

- ✓ **Analytics:** Do you know what pieces of content on your social media channels perform the best? Or even what social media channels perform the best overall? Which ones have the highest engagement or least engagement? Having accurate, informed analytics allows you to make confident choices in your marketing efforts. Your decisions should be based on actual evidence and not just 'gut feelings'.

- ✓ **Strategic Partners:** In many cases, you likely can't do this alone. I try to avoid the hard sell, but a genuine question you should ask yourself while investing time, money and resources into your efforts is; Who are you looking to as a strategic partner for your digital strategy efforts or overall strategy? Digital Pew might be a good fit for you, or we might not, but in either case you should partner with experts who can help guide your mission according to your goals



DigitalPew

Smarter Marketing Better Results

Many digital marketers have a 'shotgun' approach to digital strategy. When we take on a digital marketing client, we take every aspect of your organization into consideration and align it with your goals and objectives. We lay a foundation so we can understand your audience, key performance indicators, past successes and more.

Our solutions aren't templated, they're tailored.

Digital marketing should not be a quick fix for a core problem, but an essential component of your organization that can be leveraged for current and future success.

Let's partner and make something great.

[Schedule your Free Consultation](#)

