Using Media to Catalyze Movements

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# Introduction

## Introduction Questions

How many people use social media?

How many people use more than 2 social media platforms?

How many people watch a video on WeChat, Tiktok, or some other platform more than once per week?

## Introduction to Using Media To Catalyze Movements[[1]](#footnote-1)

In today’s time, while “mouth to ear” evangelism is still of the utmost importance, sometimes finding an audience, particularly amongst more resistant people groups or people groups spread out over a large geographic area, can be difficult. However, with social media and other websites today, church planters can make use of these modern tools to “cast a much broader net” order to draw in more people.

Using media to catalyze church planting movements is not simply mass evangelism. Media content serves as a funnel to draw people in. For media to be effective, there must be some simple way for interested people to make contact with you and your team­ – a contact form online, a way for them to send a message, or even a phone number.

By way of analogy, one-on-one evangelism is like fishing with a fishing pole. You throw your line into the water and hope for a fish to “take the bait”. However, using media is more like casting a large net into the water. You can cover a much larger area of water because the net is broader.

People don’t necessarily come to faith through the content, but spiritually open people can be discovered as a result of the content and can be put in touch with people on our teams who can follow up with them, share the Gospel, and begin discipling them.

# “PUSH” media VS. “PULL” media

## What is “Pull” Media?

People have access to media content at their fingertips 24 hours a day 7 days a week. People browse social media, and watch movies or Tik Tok videos *whenever they want*. This type of media content is called “pull media” because the content is “pulled” by the consumer of the information rather than pushed by the provider. It is also created to “pull” the consumer in.

“Pull” content seeks to draw people in *at their convenience*. After consuming the media content, they can choose to respond, if they are interested, by taking whatever next step is offered either through a contact form, message, or even phone number. The consumers are funneling themselves to you by taking the next step. One-thousand people may watch a video you post online. Twenty people may take the next step and contact you. Two of those may come to faith.

A definition for this new use of media for movements is as follows. “New media refers to on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere and on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, and creative participation.”

With this new approach, on many platforms, we can even see who is viewing it, when, on what device and most importantly more effectively have meaningful interactions with the people as they move step by step towards becoming followers of Christ.

This often requires a major paradigm shift for us – we are no longer pushing out a message, but we are [pulling in people](https://mobileministryforum.org/pullvspushmedia/) who have a need which they believe our message can satisfy. To restate this: *New Media is seeker-centric, not program-centric.* It is intended to draw people in, not simply make information about the Gospel available. We are helping people, whom God is calling, to continue along their pathway of conversion. They are in control, not us, but we are helping them by rolling out the carpet as they walk down the aisle.

Many organizations ignore this innovation shift to their peril. And since many have not changed, they are rapidly becoming obsolete.

## What is “Push” Media?

“Push’ media is the opposite of “pull” media. Previously, Gospel materials were “pushed” by Christians to non-believers or whoever would take it, sometimes indiscriminately, and often with no way to follow up. This was not a bad strategy, but the internet and social media have changed the way media is being used today.

# Media Content

Typically, the kind of content that is seeing fruit is a public social media account which contains short, interesting clips that are spiritual in nature, but not necessarily the Gospel. Below are a few examples.

* A 40 second testimony of someone freed from drug addiction followed by a question like “Are you interested in the same freedom? If so, contact…”
* A short video of someone who had previously contemplated suicide, but found a new hope. “Are you interested in discovering where she found hope? If so, fill out the contact form and you will receive a message within 24 hours.”
* In one Muslim area, one team created an ad on social media that simply asked, “Have you had a dream about a man wearing white?” Twenty-four thousand people viewed the ad, many people responded, and two came to faith in Jesus after contacting the team who produced the content.

You might have a WeChat, Youtube, or Tiktok channel that produces one video per week or per month all of which seek to draw people to you so that you can follow up with them.

# Who are we looking for? Innovators

Innovators make up 2.5% of a population. They are sometimes referred to as “The 2.5%ers”. This 2.5% of the population, the innovators, are people who may be open to spiritual change no matter how resistant the rest of the population is.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Media can be used to effectively identify these innovators, who make up 2.5% of a population, and who may be open to religious change.

Significant research has shown that mass media is a poor persuasion tool. Therefore, media products that are used among resistant peoples for persuasion will most often *fail* in converting them to Christ, but if used strategically, media products *can* be used to identify the 2.5% who are open to religious change. [[3]](#footnote-3)

# Why Innovators Are Important

It is important to understand the process of how new information flows into a community.

Innovators are typically gregarious individuals who have more social participation and hence greater connecting points with outsiders, like us, who are social change agents. They are highly connected to different relational networks and, as innovators, often have greater exposure to media channels.

Innovators, in general, are greater consumers of media and are more open to new ideas than most people. By engaging these innovators and accessing their “oikos”, we can often engage and lead those to faith who are the true decision makers in a community.

However, the problem is that they are often seen as social deviants since they frequently go against social norms, and therefore often have lower credibility in the group.[[4]](#footnote-4)

# Early Adopters and Opinion Leaders

That leads us to the next level of individuals in a society – the early adopters or opinion leaders. Innovators often introduce these opinion leaders to new information.

Early Adopters or Opinion Leaders are considered leaders within a large or small social group. Because they are leaders, these people often look to innovators for current ideas – “what is new, what is cool”- yet are more reserved in adoption. They are typically more observant and cautious than innovators due to the fact that adopting a new idea too early or too late could be detrimental to their leadership role. At the same time, for this same reason, compared to innovators, opinion leaders have higher credibility with the social group, and are seen as being in the center of interpersonal communication networks in a social system. [[5]](#footnote-5)

Innovators *may not* always come to faith, but they are instrumental in introducing you to early adopters and opinion leaders, who *are* frequently instrumental in leading many others to faith. In fact, Innovators often move on to something else within a short period of time. They are excellent in helping introduce the Gospel to a social group, may even help start a group, but most likely are not the person to build the group around. For this reason, working with and through innovators is important, but it’s important for us to make sure we are also helping innovators introduce the Gospel to others they are connected to.

# High Level conversions

Another important thing to be aware of is that we are aiming for “High Level Conversions” or genuine “Worldview Transformations”. These do not happen quickly or easily because it often takes time for the person newly engaged by the gospel to work through the implications of the information they are receiving. A video alone is not likely to accomplish that. However, those who follow up with them can walk with them to genuine faith.

Then, by encouraging them to gather their friends to discuss spiritual things together, you are helping them to share what they are discovering with the trusted people in their lives who may form the beginnings of a new group such as a Discovery Bible Study or T4T group.

# Conclusion

Developing a New Media ministry to reach your people group for Christ will require a much deeper dive into the material and methodologies, but we strongly encourage having it as part of your ministry plan. Knowing who your people are, how they come to faith, and developing a clear process leading people towards conversion using media is an important and effective evangelism tool to have in your church planting ministry. An increasing amount of resources is also becoming available to help you in this journey.

# Resources

* MMU is Media to Movements and most of this article is based upon their course.
* <https://www.mediatomovements.org/resources/mtm-article-series>
* <https://www.mediatomovements.org/articles/2-1-2-percent-church-planting-movements-from-the-periphery-to-the-center> 21/2 % Frank Preston
* <https://emdc.info/>
* <https://kingdom.training/>
* Social Media for Missions: An Introductory Guide Version 1.2 (February, 2018) Mobile Ministry Forum ([www.mobmin.org)](http://www.mobmin.org))

1. Much of the content for this module has come from an organization called Media to Movements [mediatomovements.org](http://mediatomovements.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Frank Preston. “2 1/2 Percent: Church Planting Movements from the Periphery to the Center.” Evangelical Missions Quarterly, January 2010: accessed online. Missio Nexus. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)