

Our Creative Workflow

One of the biggest challenges for any media department is balancing creativity with consistency. Every request feels important, but without a clear system, projects can quickly become overwhelming, deadlines get missed, and creative quality begins to suffer.

Over the years, we've developed a workflow that helps us stay organized while still allowing room for creativity & the Spirit to move. Whether your church has one media volunteer or an entire creative team, the principles below can be adapted to fit your ministry.

Step 1: Every Project Begins with a Request

Before any work begins, every project starts with a request form. Having one central place for requests keeps communication organized, ensures important details aren't missed, and allows our team to prioritize work effectively.

Our request form is built using Jotform, then automatically sent into ClickUp through Zapier, where it becomes a task for our team. While these are the platforms we use, any form and project management system can accomplish the same goal.

Our request form can be viewed here:

<https://abundantlifechurch.com/media-request>

We also embed the form on our website and make it available through our church app so it's always easy to access.

Why We Use a Request Form

Every request asks for as much information as possible before the project begins. This reduces unnecessary back-and-forth conversations and allows our team to begin with a clear understanding of the project's purpose, audience, timeline, and expectations.

We also establish realistic turnaround times based on our current workload. While a single graphic may only take a few days, a full event branding package or marketing campaign requires significantly more planning and production time. Because of this, we

encourage staff and ministry leaders to submit requests at least two weeks in advance whenever possible.

Once requests are received, the media leader reviews them, determines priority, assigns the project to the appropriate team member, and communicates updates with the requester throughout the process.

Step 2: Our Three Creative Phases

Every project that enters our media department moves through three distinct phases. Separating these phases allows us to think creatively, make intentional decisions, and execute with excellence without constantly changing direction.

Phase 1: Dreaming

This is where creativity is at its highest. We brainstorm ideas, gather inspiration, ask questions, and explore different directions before making any major decisions. During this phase, no idea is dismissed too quickly because creativity flourishes when people have freedom to explore. The purpose is to generate possibilities, not achieve perfection just yet.

Questions we ask:

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- Who is this for?
- What story are we trying to tell?
- How do we want people to feel?
- What ideas are worth exploring?

Phase 2: Planning

After exploring ideas, we begin narrowing our options. This is where we decide what stays, what gets removed, establish timelines, assign responsibilities, and create a clear direction before any production begins. The purpose is to make decisions and finish with a clear plan everyone understands.

During this phase we determine:

- The overall concept

- Deliverables
- Timeline
- Responsibilities
- Final creative direction

Phase 3: Execution

Once planning is complete, our focus shifts from making decisions to creating. Designers, photographers, videographers, and other team members execute the agreed-upon plan. The purpose is to bring the vision to life and execute the plan with excellence and finish what was started.

One of our guiding principles is simple: We don't brainstorm during execution.

New ideas almost always appear while a project is being created, but unless they're absolutely necessary or Spirit-led, we save those ideas for the next project. Protecting the execution phase from constant changes allows projects to stay on schedule while producing stronger, more consistent results.

Why This Process Works

Many creative teams struggle because they try to dream, plan, and execute all at the same time. Every new idea changes the direction of the project, creating unnecessary revisions, missed deadlines, and frustration.

By intentionally separating these stages, we've found our team is able to be both more creative and more productive.

A Final Thought

Not every project requires the same amount of time in each phase. A simple sign-up sheet, announcement graphic, or sermon slide may move through all three phases in just a few minutes, while a conference, sermon series, or major marketing campaign may spend days or even weeks in the Dreaming and Planning phases before production begins.

The key isn't that every project receives the same amount of attention, but that every project receives the right amount of attention. By intentionally moving through these

three phases, whether in five minutes or five weeks, our team stays organized, avoids unnecessary revisions, and creates work that is both intentional and effective.