



Does Your Image Hinder Your Mission?

Creating a survey

You may wish to create and conduct a survey on this topic. Perhaps you could consider creating and conducting two surveys: one for church attenders and one for the wider community. If you are a rural church then the wider community would probably be the village. If you are in an urban or suburban situation then the community might be those living in the housing near to your church. Alternatively you could conduct a simple poll of members of the public.

Whatever you decide please remember to be polite. Ask people if they would help by answering a few questions and remember to thank them nicely afterwards. Remember, it's about image!

For the surveys to be sufficiently helpful they must be anonymous. Point this out when asking people for their help.

Some surveys go into great detail, asking things about gender, age and ethnicity. That is probably unnecessary here. Basically, you simply want to know what people think about the church. The best way to gather this information is by using tick boxes. You should use the same form for church-goers and those who do not regularly attend.

You could start off with "How often have you attended a service at [your church]?" Provide no more than five options. For example, never, once or twice a year, at least once a month, most weeks, as often as I can. You can link a second question: "When was the last time you attended [your church]?" Options might be: date space, within the last month... three months... six months... year... more than a year... never.

Provide a list of possible responses to the question, "When you think about church what words or phrases come to mind (please be honest). Set out the options so that positive and negative options are mixed. Space them out and ensure that you use at least 12pt font. Here are some suggestions:

Relevant, Irrelevant, Boring, Thought provoking, Lively, Exciting, Old fashioned, Out of touch, Enjoyable, Helpful, Up to date, Hypocrites, Sincerity, Preaching, Judgemental, Welcoming. You can add or subtract options but have the same number of positive as negative words.

In a rural situation you are likely to know the respondents so anonymity needs some help. Leave the form and provide a plain envelope. Then arrange a suitable 'post-box' where they can be left. A village shop or pub might help you.

When conducting the survey you may come across someone who would like to know more. So you can provide an option for people to add name and address in such cases. **Please Note** it is important to be wise if making visits. When conducting the survey you should not proceed beyond the doorstep. Any follow-up visits should not be made to someone of the opposite sex on your own. Be careful not to risk yourself or the reputation of your church.

If you would like further help please write to Rural Mission Solutions, Centre for Rural Mission, 4 Clarence Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7NE, or email info@ruralmissions.org.uk.