

**Channel Complementarity in Marketing Communication
for Proclamational Evangelistic Events**

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I have an ownership stake in a commercial enterprise that offers marketing services to churches.

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Abstract

Channel Complementarity Theory suggests that media consumers use multiple communication channels based on their functional need, rather than choosing a communication medium for its own sake. The literature suggests that the promoting evangelistic events using multiple communication channels should generate a greater response than using a single channel alone. However, research on 1,734 marketing campaigns for evangelistic events between 2017 and 2023 found that campaigns utilizing direct mail, outdoor advertising, and social media advertising combined did not generate more pre-registrations per campaign dollar spent than those campaigns that used just one or two of these communication channels. The research also found that the effectiveness of these campaigns improved significantly after the Covid-19 pandemic, as costs per registration declined across nearly all communication channel categories.

Keywords: channel complementarity theory, proclamational evangelism, church marketing, event advertising

Channel Complementarity in Marketing Communication for Proclamational Evangelistic Events

Proclamational evangelism is the public preaching of an evangelistic message with several characteristics unique to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including a marketing campaign run at significant cost to the church. This evangelistic method has been seeing declining success, primarily due to decreasing effectiveness of the event marketing. Channel Complementarity Theory suggests that media consumers use multiple communication channels based on their functional need, rather than choosing a communication medium for its own sake. The literature suggests that the promoting evangelistic events using multiple communication channels could generate a greater response than using a single channel alone. It is therefore hypothesized that marketing campaigns for evangelistic events which communicate through direct mail, outdoor advertising, and social media advertising will generate more pre-registrations than those campaigns that use just one or two of these communication channels. Data from several thousand event marketing campaigns were analyzed to determine whether the hypothesis is disproven.

Proclamational Evangelism

Proclamational evangelism is the public preaching of an evangelistic message and has several unique characteristics in Seventh-day Adventist church practice (Anderson, 2014; Walter, 2018). First, it is a series of meetings that takes place multiple nights per week over the course of several weeks. Second, these meetings are open to the public, and the series frequently has an associated marketing campaign run at significant cost to the church, for the purpose of recruiting members of the public to participate in the meetings. Third, at these meetings the foundational doctrines of the denomination are explained, using the Bible as the primary

teaching source. And finally, during these meetings each participant is invited to make a series of decisions to accept the denomination's interpretation of Scripture, leading to a decision for baptism and ultimately to becoming a member of the church.

Proclamational Evangelism in Scripture

Proclamational evangelism was one of the primary evangelistic methods used by the New Testament church. For example, book of Acts records two cases where the Apostle Peter preached to large crowds in Jerusalem shortly after Jesus's ascension, leading to 3,000 new believers being baptized in one case (New American Standard Bible, 2020, Acts 2:14-41) and as many as 2,000 in another (New American Standard Bible, 2020, Acts 3:12-4:4). The Apostle Philip preached in Samaria, and "as a result, many men and women were baptized" (New Living Translation, 2015, Acts 8:4-12). The Apostle Paul preached to both Jews and Gentiles in Antioch, speaking to "almost the entire city" (New Living Translation, 2015, Acts 13:13-49), and he later preached in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens, to mixed success (New Living Translation, Acts 17). Thus, proclamational methods have been core to evangelistic practice since the earliest days of the Christian Church.

Proclamational Evangelism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Proclamational evangelism has been the primary driver of growth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church since the denomination was founded in the 1860's (Bull & Lockhart, 2007), and last received significant scholarly attention in the 1970's (Chong et al., 1976; Johnson, 1977; Japas, 1978). One such study found 93% of new Adventists attended at least one public evangelistic meeting and over half attended all the meetings of one or more series (Chong et al., 1976, p. 63), suggesting this experience was at that time an important step toward membership. A more recent study showed that over 90% of Adventist young adult member respondents had

attended one or more public evangelistic series (Parker & Charvat, 2019), suggesting it continues to be a valuable methodology for recruiting new members. And indeed, the denomination continues to use this evangelistic method successfully (Anderson, 2014; Parker, 2017; Walter, 2018; Burrill, 2018) as it continues growing. In 2009 the Seventh-day Adventist Church was listed as one of the fastest growing denominations in the United States (MacDonald, 2011), and prior to the Covid-19 pandemic membership grew 5.4% in this country over the six year period ending in 2019 (NAD Secretariat, 2023).

Historically, proclamational evangelistic methods have been used by many Christian denominations, receiving some scholarly attention (e.g., Dickenson, 1968), but today have been largely abandoned by the broader evangelical church community (Whiting, 2022). There is some evidence, though, that proclamational evangelistic methods continue to be effective in gaining Seventh-day Adventist converts (Parker, 2017; Burrill, 2018), despite a decrease in measurable success. This loss of effectiveness has led to growing opposition to proclamational evangelism among Seventh-day Adventist members (Delafield & Gibbs, 2017; Larson, 2019; Hannon, 2020; Kidder, 2020).

Declining Effectiveness of Event Marketing

A major reason for this method's decreased effectiveness is the declining performance of the event marketing, leading to reduced attendance. For several decades, the advertising strategy for these meetings has relied primarily on direct mail to drive attendance (Walter, 2018).

However, the effectiveness of this particular communication channel has been declining over the last 2 decades (Rester, 2022, 2023). In the early 2000s, one evangelist saw response rates of 8-12 per thousand, meaning that a mailing to 10,000 could expect to see 80-120 guests on opening night (B. Corbett, personal communication, July 12, 2023). Today, however, this evangelist sees

a typical response rate of less than 1 per thousand, meaning that same mailing would generate fewer than 10 guests.

Once guests are participating in an evangelistic event, the effectiveness of proclamational evangelism has remained relatively unchanged during this time (Burrell, 2018; B. Corbett, personal communication, July 12, 2023) even as the marketing has declined in effectiveness. This decline could be driven by the marketing offer of a multi-night event not speaking to the needs felt by people in the community (Witzel, 2020). It might also be due to the declining impact of direct mail overall (Ball, 2023), in which case a broader mix of communication channels could improve the marketing effectiveness.

Channel Complementarity Theory

For decades, scholars studying the interaction between existing media and new communication channels found evidence of displacement. But more recent research has found complementary use of communication channels. This section reviews the literature related to Channel Complementary Theory, as well as the biblical evidence for multi-channel communication and its use in contemporary ministry.

Communication Channel Displacement

Lazarsfeld's (1940) groundbreaking research looked at the impact of radio, a recent innovation at the time, on the use of print media, finding evidence that radio use displaced time spent using newspapers, magazines, and books. In subsequent years, researchers studying the impact of other new media found television displaced radio (Mendolsohn, 1964), cable television displaced broadcast television, radio, and theater attendance (Kaplan, 1978), and videocassette recorders displaced live broadcast television (Henke & Donohue, 1989). Articulating the widespread expectation of new media reducing consumption of existing media, Henke and

Donohue (1989) stated, “The introduction of a new electronic medium or technological advancement tends to cause a reorganization in the way consumers come to view the established media” (p. 18). In the media displacement framework, media consumption is a zero-sum game: as users turn to a new medium, they necessarily spend less time consuming existing media.

Channel Complementarity Theory

However, as new media channels proliferated in the early 2000s, evidence emerged that it was not necessarily displacing use of existing media. This led Mohan Dutta-Bergmann in 2004 to propose *Channel Complementarity Theory* (CCT), which posits that the choice of channels by users is driven by “the motivation for or the functionality of the medium rather than its nature” (Littlejohn et al., 2021, p. 168). According to this theory, the proliferation of media led to consumers thinking about the function they were attempting to perform and selecting media appropriate for that function, rather than starting by selecting a specific medium to use. Dutta-Bergmann wrote:

[There] is a consistent underlying interest that manifests itself in the choice to read, watch or listen to specific media content. As a consequence, complementarity or congruence is observed in consumption of specific communicative functions across a variety of media types. The individual is loyal to particular communicative functions based on his or her underlying drives and satisfies these functional needs by consuming different media types. (Dutta-Bergmann, 2004, p. 663)

After it was proposed in 2004, CCT sat mostly dormant for nearly a decade. But then it began to receive more attention, particularly in the area of health communications. Ruppel and Rains (2012) extended CCT to the realm of the information-seeking process. They found that when seeking health information, consumers utilize multiple sources, such as health care

providers, print media, and online support groups (Rains & Ruppel, 2016). Zhang et al. (2017) considered media complementarity in the acquisition of health information in China. Lee et al. (2018) extended CCT into the concept of trust complementarity, considering cancer information-seeking behavior. Ruppel et al. (2018) looked at the selection of media used by long-distance friends, finding phone calls, text messaging, and video chat usage to be complementary to varying degrees, depending on the closeness of the friendships. Looking at finance and economics, Glynn and Huges (2014) noted complementarity among traditional media, online media, interpersonal conversation, and professional communication. Neyazi et al. (2019) considered both displacement and complementarity theories in a non-western, non-information-seeking context. They found that “exposure to traditional media significantly predicted exposure to social media ... demonstrating the positive relationship between traditional and new media-based exposure and information-sharing” (Neyazi et al., 2019, p. 656). Liao et al. (2022) found participation in brand-oriented social media communities across multiple platforms to be complementary, and Lin and Dutta (2017) confirmed CCT in the context of internet users in India.

Channel Complementarity in Mass Media

While CCT research has centered primarily on interpersonal communication (Dutta-Bergmann, 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Ruppel et al., 2018) and information-seeking behavior (Ruppel & Rains, 2012, 2016; Zhang et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018), there has been little consideration of CCT in the unidirectional mass media or advertising context. Communicating concurrently through multiple channels as an advertising strategy has been well documented (Batra & Keller, 2016; Chen & Lamberti, 2016; Sridhar et al., 2022). Research has also confirmed that there are interactions and complementarities among traditional and new media, such as social media,

search, television, and offline word of mouth (Mayzlin & Shin, 2011; Voorveld et al., 2011; Joo et al., 2013). Lesscher et al. (2021) recently published a paper looking specifically at the impact of direct mail on users of online media, finding clear synergy between online display advertising and direct marketing. Sridhar et al. (2022) studied the cross-media effects among email, direct mail, television, and radio, finding that mixing various types of marketing media results in more effective campaigns. Because of this, consideration of CCT in this context is warranted.

Scriptural Evidence of Multi-channel Communication

There is biblical evidence of successful event promotion using multiple media channels. In 2 Chronicles 30, the story is told of Hezekiah inviting the people of both Israel and Judah to come to an event celebrating the reopening of the temple. In the original Hebrew language, four different words are used to describe the act of promoting this event:

King Hezekiah now sent *word* [emphasis added] to all Israel and Judah, and he wrote *letters* [emphasis added] of invitation to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh. ... So they sent a *proclamation* [emphasis added] throughout all Israel. ... At the king's command, *runners* [emphasis added] were sent throughout Israel and Judah. (New Living Translation, 2015, 2 Chronicles 30:1, 5, 6)

It is interesting to note that the author, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, chose to use these four different words: *word*, *letters*, *proclamation*, and *runners*. While the modern reader might hear these as the same channel of communication, commentators have suggested that this represented multiple methods of communication (Exell & Spence-Jones, 1897; MacLaren, 1912). The intentional use of these four different words within such a short passage suggests that these might in fact have been considered different modes of communication at that

time. It certainly points to Hezekiah using every communication method available to him to broadcast his invitation throughout the kingdom.

Contemporary Ministry Use of Multi-channel Communication

Until more recent times, religious organizations predominantly held a negative view of advertising and marketing (McDaniel, 1986). But today advertising has been embraced by most of the religious community. Percy (2000) wrote, “Advertising cannot convert people, nor does it bring them to faith. It can, however, persuade the public to take a second look...or possibly even stimulate desire” (p. 101). As a result, religious organizations today routinely use television advertising (Pritchard et al., 2015), radio (Deacy, 2019), social media (Morehouse & Saffer, 2021), direct mail (Walter, 2018), and outdoor advertising (Spurlock, 2014).

If media displace each other, sending marketing communications through multiple media will reach more consumers through the specific medium each one uses, but will not necessarily lead to a synergistic increase in response rates. If media channels complement each other, however, then advertising through multiple media will result in increased exposure to the marketing message, leading to higher response rates than could be explained by simply reaching a wider audience. Therefore, due to channel complementarity it would be expected that advertising campaigns that use more media channels will perform better.

Research Questions

The following research questions were considered:

1. What is the median cost per registration for marketing campaigns across the entire data set?
2. How does the median cost per registration vary based on which communication channels were used for the campaign?

3. Does using multiple channels result in a lower cost per registration beyond what could be explained by variances in costs per registration for each individual channel?
4. How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact response rates? Specifically, has there been a shift in patterns between events with start dates prior to the pandemic in 2020 and events in 2022 and 2023?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The median cost per registration will be significantly lower for campaigns using all 3 communication channels than those that used just 1 or 2 of them.

Hypothesis 2: The median cost per registration will be significantly lower for campaigns using 2 of the communication channels than those that used just 1 of them.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference between pre-pandemic and post-pandemic in the channel complementarity between response rates for each channel.

Methodology

Over the last 15 years, SermonView Evangelism Marketing has managed over 6,000 advertising campaigns for evangelistic events for about 2,500 churches throughout the United States and Canada (SermonView, n.d.). The three primary communication channels used in these campaigns are direct mail, outdoor advertising through banners and road signs, and social media advertising. While many of these event marketing campaigns used all three communication channels, others only used one or two of them. For some campaigns, the call to action for messages through all three channels directed people to a website dedicated to that event where someone could reserve seats by pre-registering for the event, indicating intention to participate in the event. For other campaigns, social media advertising directed to an on-page form where someone could reserve a seat, while the other channels directed to the event website.

Anonymized campaign data were analyzed, including how much was spent on each communication channel and the overall number of pre-registrations. Data was available for a total of 2,490 campaigns, composed of those campaigns since the start of 2017 for which money was spent on at least one of the three channels and which also received at least one pre-registration. Some of these campaigns were for online-only events, which used a different mix of communication channels and offered a lower-friction event that could skew the results. As a result, these were removed from the sample, leaving 1,734 campaigns in the study.

Total campaign spending was determined by totaling the amounts spent on each of the studied communication channels. All other campaign spending not associated with any of the three channels was excluded from the total campaign spending. The campaign spending dollar value is a good metric for this study, due to the way these marketing campaigns are budgeted. Customers often come to SermonView with a fixed budget, and a campaign manager recommends how these funds are allocated (L. Ball, personal communication, July 6, 2023). Therefore, the dollar value spent on the campaign allocated across communication channels is a good proxy for the actual distribution of marketing messages across the various communication channels.

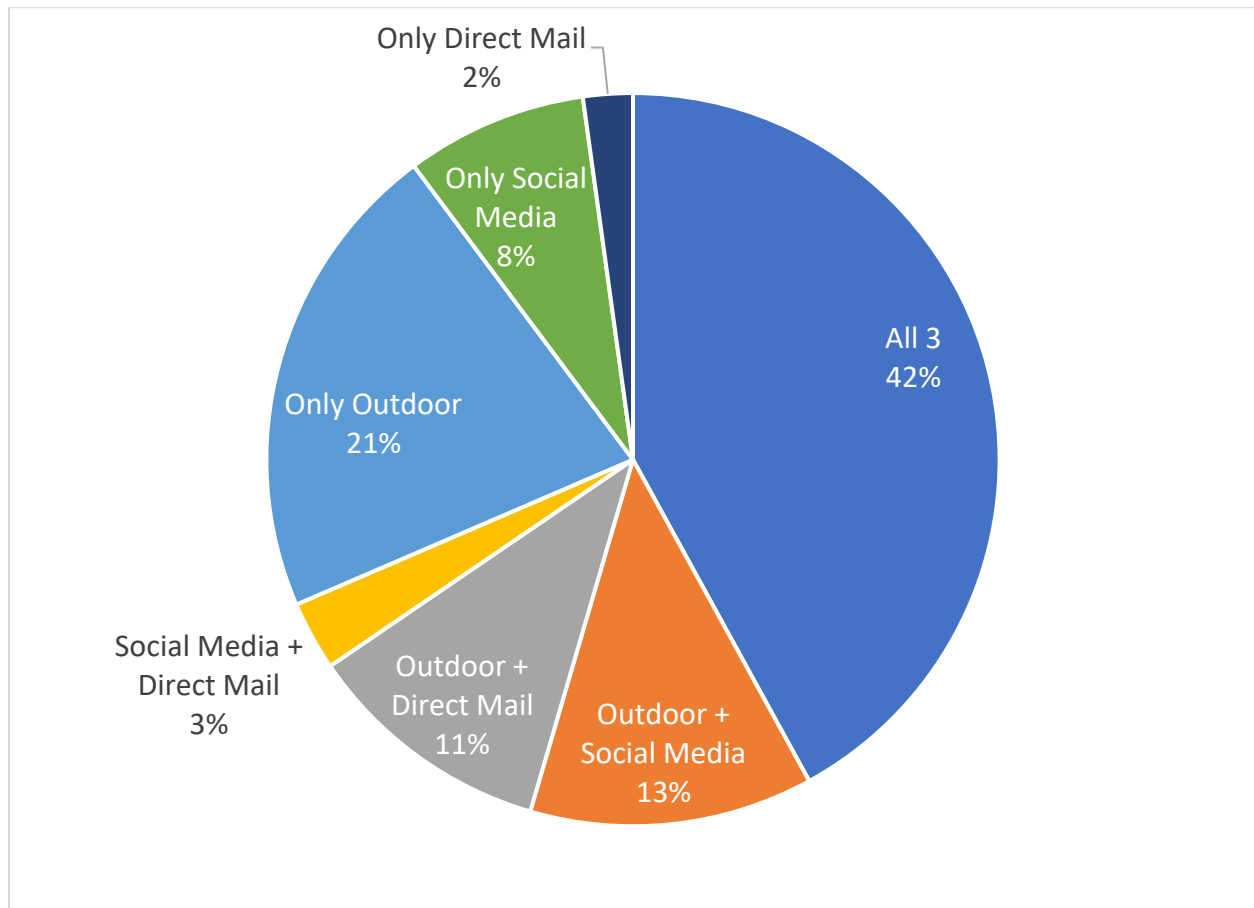
The campaigns were grouped into seven categories, based on which communication channels were used for the advertising: only direct mail; only outdoor advertising; only social media advertising; both direct mail and outdoor advertising; both outdoor advertising and social media advertising; both direct mail and social media advertising; and usage of all three channels. Three additional categories were also considered: all campaigns that used outdoor advertising; all campaigns that used social media advertising; and all campaigns that used direct mail. Table 1 shows the distribution of campaigns across all 10 categories, while Figure 1 shows the

distribution of campaigns across the first 7 mutually-exclusive categories. No one category had a majority of campaigns, with the highest being all 3 communications channels at 42.0% of campaigns.

Table 1

Communication Channel Categories and Percentage of Campaigns

Communication Channel Category	Number of Campaigns	Percentage of Campaigns
All 3 channels	729	42.0%
Outdoor + social media channels	217	12.5%
Outdoor +direct mail channels	190	11.0%
Social media + direct mail channels	53	3.1%
Only outdoor channel	369	21.3%
Only social media channel	139	8.0%
Only direct mail channel	38	2.2%
Outdoor channel	1,505	86.8%
Social media channel	1,138	65.6%
Direct mail channel	1,010	58.2%

Figure 1*Communication Channel Categories and Percentage of Campaigns*

A cost per registration for each campaign was then determined by looking at the total dollar value spent across these three channels and dividing by the total number of event pre-registrations for that campaign. The median cost per registration for each campaign category was then determined and compared across all ten categories.

In addition, to determine the effect of any cultural or societal shifts caused by the Covid-19 pandemic on these statistics, campaigns before and after the pandemic were compared. There were 1,120 campaigns with the event start date prior to March 16, 2020, the date when the White House officially advised against meeting in groups of more than 10 people (Liptak, 2020) leading widespread shutdowns of events such as those promoted by these marketing campaigns.

An end date for the pandemic is not similarly clear. However, an uptick in in-person events in January, 2022, suggest the beginning of a return to normalcy at that time. Therefore, January 1, 2022, was selected as the start date of the post-pandemic group, which contained 309 campaigns.

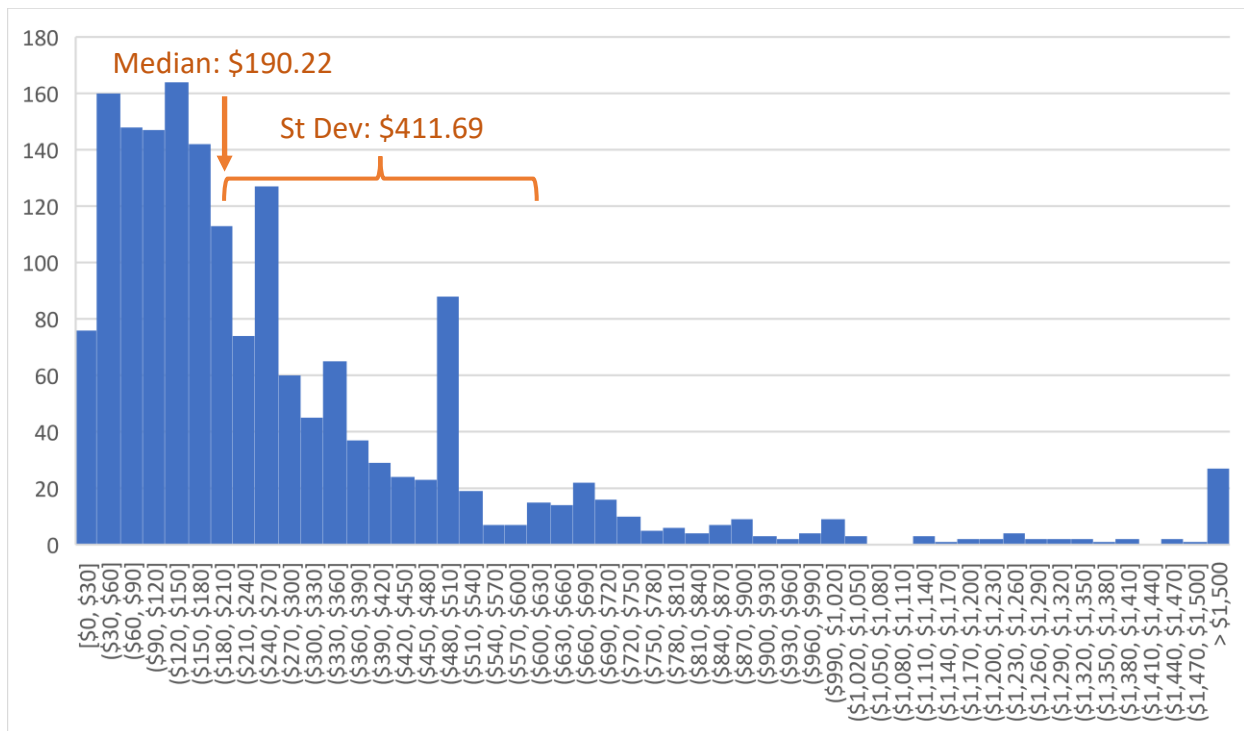
Results

Research Question 1

The first research question addressed the cost per registration (CPR) across the entire population of campaigns. To determine this, two approaches were considered. The first was to calculate the CPR for each campaign and find the median, resulting in a value of \$190.22. The data showed a long tail of CPRs, ranging from \$2.45 to \$5,955.82 per registration. The standard deviation was \$411.69, indicating a long tail distribution as opposed to a normal curve. Figure 2 shows a histogram of this data, with the median and standard deviation.

Figure 2

Histogram of Cost per Registration across All Campaigns



An alternate approach was to determine the median number of registrations, 12, along with the median cost for the campaign, \$4,207.25. Using these two median numbers results in a much higher CPR of \$350.60. Table 2 compares the CPR from these 2 methods. The CPR calculated from median registrations and median cost was 84.3% higher than the median CPR calculated at the campaign level.

Table 2

Cost per Registration Variance by Method

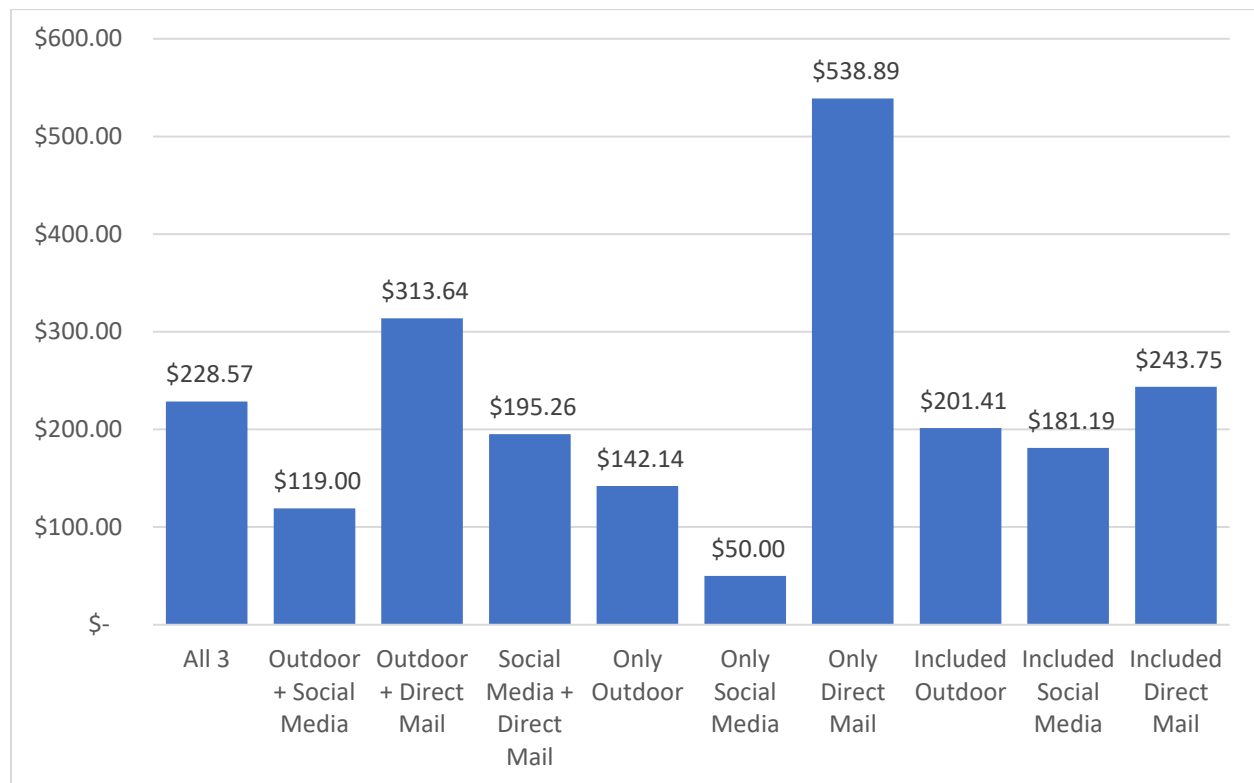
Method	Cost Per Registration
Median value after calculating each campaign's CPR	\$190.22
Calculated CPR using median cost and median registration count	\$350.60

Research Question 2

The second research question asked how the median cost per registration varied by which communication media were used. Across the entire population, the median cost per registration ranged from \$50.00 for campaigns that only used social media, to \$538.89 for campaigns that only used direct mail. Table 3 breaks down the median CPR by category, and Figure 3 shows this same data in graphical form.

Table 3*Median Cost per Registration by Communication Channel Category*

Communication Channel Category	Median Cost Per Registration
All 3 channels	\$228.57
Outdoor + social media channels	\$119.00
Outdoor +direct mail channels	\$313.64
Social media + direct mail channels	\$195.26
Only outdoor channel	\$142.14
Only social media channel	\$50.00
Only direct mail channel	\$538.89
Outdoor channel	\$201.41
Social media channel	\$181.19
Direct mail channel	\$243.75

Figure 3*Cost per Registration by Communication Channel Category*

It is clear from this data that the effectiveness per dollar spent varies considerably across all 3 communication channels, with direct mail being the most expensive, social media advertising being the least expensive, and outdoor advertising being somewhere in between. With direct mail showing a CPR 10 times higher than social media advertising, it would be easy to ask why direct mail is used at all. However, pre-registrations are not the goal of each campaign; attendance at the event is the goal. There is anecdotal evidence that people who pre-register for an event when coming from social media advertising are less likely to attend than those who register from direct mail or outdoor advertising (L. Ball, personal communication, July 6, 2023). As a result, social media advertising may not ultimately generate the same rate of attendees per dollar as it does pre-registrations.

Hypotheses 1 and 2

Hypothesis 1 proposed from channel complementarity theory that the median cost per registration will be lower for campaigns using all 3 communication channels than those that used just 1 or 2 of them. This was true for 2 of the categories that included direct mail, but not for any categories that included social media advertising. It was also not true for the category that included outdoor advertising and direct mail. Hypothesis 1 was therefore disproven.

This could be explained by the sheer volume of spending consumed by direct mail with its significantly higher CPR. Campaigns that used the direct mail communication channel on average spent 64.3% of the budget on direct mail. Table 4 shows the median budget for each communication channel across the entire population of campaigns, along with the median budget for all campaigns and those that included direct mail.

Table 4

Median Campaign Budget for Each Communication Channel

Communication Channel	Median Campaign Budget	% of Spending
Outdoor advertising	\$500.00	11.9%
Social media advertising	\$1,000.00	23.8%
Direct mail	\$2,707.25	64.3%
Total of median spending	\$4,207.25	100%
Median total spending across all campaigns	\$2,450.00	
Median total spending across campaigns with mailing	\$4,300.00	

Hypothesis 2 was that median cost per registration would be lower for campaigns using 2 of the communication channels than those that used just 1 of them. This was true for direct mail in all cases, and also true for outdoor advertising when it was combined with social media advertising. However, it was not true for any other category. Again, this was likely due to the CPR for social media being so much lower than the other communication channels. Hypothesis 2 was therefore disproven.

Research Question 3

This research question asked if using multiple channels resulted in a lower CPR beyond what could be explained by variances in costs per registration for each individual channel. Specifically, is there a greater reduction in CPR for all three channels than could be explained by averaging the CPRs for individual channels? To answer this question, the median spending for each communication channel was determined, along with the median number of pre-registrations for each channel when used alone. This was then used to impute what the expected CPR would be when these individual communication channels are combined together. These computed values are shown in Table 5. The expected CPR when combining the individual communication channels is \$171.72, which is 24.9% less than the actual median CPR for campaigns using all 3 channels of \$228.57. Therefore, not only is the CPR for campaigns using all 3 channels higher than most of the other campaign categories, it is also higher than would be expected by calculating the average CPR for individual communication channels when weighted by proportion of campaign spending.

Table 5*Expected Contribution toward CPR for Each Communication Channel*

Communication Channel	Median Registrations	Median Spend	Calculated CPR
Outdoor advertising	4	\$500.00	\$125.00
Social media advertising	16	\$1,000.00	\$62.50
Direct mail	4.5	\$2,707.25	\$601.61
Total	24.5	\$4,207.25	\$171.72
Actual Median CPR for All 3			\$228.57

Research Question 4 and Hypothesis 3

Research question 4 asked how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted response rates. Because these marketing campaigns promoted in-person events, and these types of events were shut down for a period of time due to the pandemic, did this result in a change in behavior among these campaigns' target audience? Hypothesis 3 suggested that based on channel complementary theory there would be no difference between pre-pandemic and post-pandemic response rates.

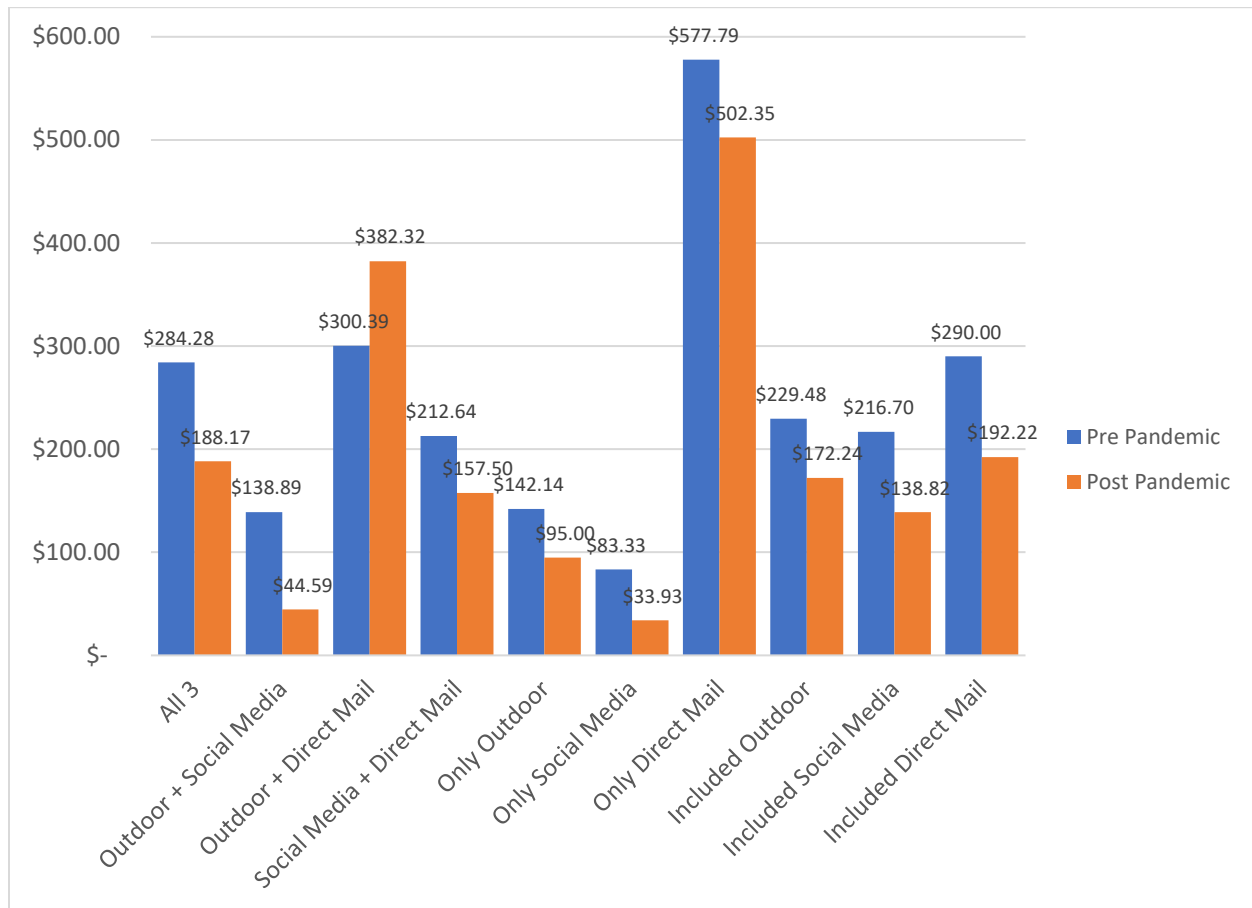
In fact, for 9 of the 10 channel categories, the CPR dropped significantly, with these reductions ranging from 13.1% to 69.7%. In only one category, those campaigns using outdoor advertising plus direct mail, did the CPR increase by 27.3%. The CPR both pre- and post-pandemic are shown in Table 6, and this data is represented visually in Figure 4.

Table 6*Cost per Registration by Communication Channel Category, Pre and Post Pandemic*

Communication Channel Category	Median Pre Pandemic Cost per Registration	Median Post Pandemic Cost per Registration	Post Pandemic Change
All 3 channels	\$284.28	\$188.17	-33.8%
Outdoor + social media channels	\$138.89	\$44.59	-67.9%
Outdoor +direct mail channels	\$300.39	\$382.32	+27.3%
Social media + direct mail channels	\$212.64	\$157.50	-25.9%
Only outdoor channel	\$142.14	\$95.00	-33.2%
Only social media channel	\$83.33	\$33.93	-59.3%
Only direct mail channel	\$577.79	\$502.35	-13.1%
Outdoor channel	\$229.48	\$172.24	-25.0%
Social media channel	\$216.70	\$138.82	-36.0%
Direct mail channel	\$290.00	\$192.22	-33.7%

Figure 4

Cost per Registration by Communication Channel Category, Pre & Post Pandemic



There are at least three potential explanations for this improved campaign performance after the pandemic. One is that after being trapped inside for months, people were eager to get back to in-person experiences again. Another is that the pandemic caused people to reflect more on spiritual things, leading them to be more receptive to attending a seminar on Bible prophecy. It’s also possible that the marketing professionals at SermonView continued to hone their craft and improved the effectiveness of the marketing messaging, and that this improvement in CPR was a natural consequence of that. It’s likely the actual reason for these reduced costs per registration is some combination of all three explanations.

Suggestions for Further Research

Ultimately, the goal of this marketing activity is to encourage individuals to physically come to the evangelistic meetings. This study used event pre-registrations as a proxy for attendance; however, there is some anecdotal evidence that the rate of attendance for people who pre-register vary based on the communication channel driving the response (L. Ball, personal communication, July 6, 2023). Specifically, some customers believe that people who pre-register from social media advertising are less likely to come. If this is true, the cost per opening night attendee from social media advertising would be significantly higher than the \$50.00 median cost noted in this study. If people who register on the website are 5 times more likely to attend than those who register directly on Facebook, that would significantly increase the cost per attendee for social media advertising.

Therefore, knowing how these participation rates vary will help better understand the actual impact of each communication channel on the ultimate goal of the marketing. SermonView, through its InterestTracker software used by some customers for tracking attendance at evangelistic meetings, has access to full attendance data for several hundred events. Due to the way the pre-registration system integrates with InterestTracker, it is possible to determine whether each checked-in participant pre-registered for the event, and whether this pre-registration was done on the event website or through a Facebook on-page form. This is one important area for further research.

Another potential avenue of inquiry would be to explore the reasons for the reduction in costs per registration seen after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

Channel Complementarity Theory suggests that media consumers use multiple communication channels based on their functional need, rather than choosing a communication medium for its own sake. The literature suggests that the promoting evangelistic events using multiple communication channels could generate a greater response than using a single channel alone. However, this research on 1,734 marketing campaigns for evangelistic events found that campaigns utilizing direct mail, outdoor advertising, and social media advertising combined did not generate more pre-registrations per campaign dollar spent than those campaigns that used just one or two of these communication channels. The research also found that these costs per registration declined significantly after the Covid-19 pandemic.

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