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Client:

Hillside Community
Church
Rancho Cucamonga, CA

Hillside Community Church has served in the heart of their community for the last fifty years - having been led through almost all of those years by their founding pastor. Several years before my arrival, they had begun the transition to a new leadership team that, by my time, had successfully launched Hillside into a new generation. The problem was much of what they were doing would reflect the mindset of, "That's the way we've always done it." While the church was a modern gathering place for young families, their brand strategy and marketing still reflected an old way of doing things - think paper bulletins, paper announcements, paper marketing - lots and lots of paper.

Audience

Hillside sits at the literally top of a diverse affluent community of young families at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains. Primarily our target persona was known as Young Mom Stacey. She's a working mom with young children who were committed to keeping her family engaged in her local community through school, sports, and church. She is digitally savvy and active on social media. In a way, she is a micro-influencer for her small community of friends and families as she shares her family's many adventures on her platforms.

Strategy

The first step in creating a strategy for Hillside was to do nothing. Instead of coming in and trying to change an entrenched system, I had to build trust with the team and observe places for improvement and opportunities for change with fresh eyes. This led to the development of our first team priority - Act as champions of the mission and vision of Hillside to our three core audiences (Our Community, Our Members, and Our Team). We built trust, buy-in, and expertise through this priority that allowed for the changes to come.

From that foundation, we focused on creating a brand that reflected our target market while building a marketing strategy that leveraged digital media and working to transition away from outdated platforms and processes that did not fit with how our families lived their lives today.

Results

1. Led an organization-wide effort to transition to a new ChMS platform, which dramatically increased our marketing, analytics, and community-building capabilities. This transition included:
 - a. Transitioning our online giving to a new platform (including managing team buy-in and training)
 - b. Setting up new processes for event planning, small group development, and resource management.
 - c. Creating marketing automations, list segmentations, and resourcing teams with best practices for reaching their audiences
2. Creating year-end giving campaign strategies that led to a 39% increase in giving over four years, beginning in 2016 and ending with an 18.3% increase in 2019. Of that, 53% of donations came from online platforms, a significant increase from the previous platform.
3. Digitally focused marketing strategy helped to drive double digit growth in attendance year after year with 25% of first-time guests attributed directly to digital marketing sources.
4. Launched an initiative to develop new leaders to help meet the organization's goals, resulting in creating a ten-week leadership cohort and redesigned internship program.
5. Worked with the multi-site team to help launch a second campus through providing brand strategy, marketing strategy, and demographic analytics.