**Fall Line Church:**

**A New Generation**

**of Ministry**

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# Fall Line Church: A New Generation of Ministry

Fall Line Church is the client for this project. No designated individual was supervising the work during the time of engagement. Fall Line Church is a religious organization that provides spiritual services, promotes community engagement, and offers various programs designed to cater to families and children in the South Macon community and beyond. The church is located in South Macon, Georgia, and focuses on fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for regular church members and visiting community members. Fall Line Church has about 20 paid staff. They rely on a combination of staff members and dedicated volunteers to support its operations and programs.

Fall Line Church’s current marketing and public relations efforts primarily focus on engaging the local South Macon community through in-person programs like Fall Line Kids and Youth Macon, which are tailored to families. While these strategies effectively connect with the immediate audience, the church’s digital presence is limited and lacks a consistent strategy, reducing its ability to reach a broader demographic, particularly younger individuals who rely on digital platforms. Though traditional methods such as flyers or event announcements may be used, the frequency and effectiveness of these efforts are unclear. By refining its digital marketing and adopting a structured approach to online communication, the church could enhance its outreach and build stronger connections with its target market. Lastly, there are no historical marketing or public relations issues that exist - to my knowledge.

I believe my client wants to do three things related to their “brand” as a church. The first is to promote their sub-brands, i.e., Fall Line Kids, Youth Macon, the Dream Center, and their small groups within the ministry to enhance their reach. Secondly, they want to boost event participation to encourage attendance and increase engagement. Ultimately, they desire to expand their online giving to enable further ministry development and propel excellence in their resource provision.

# This report outlines strategies to help Fall Line Church amplify its impact and reach. It includes an industry report analyzing trends in the faith-based and nonprofit sectors, market, and consumer research to understand community needs, and a proposed study focused on three key goals: promoting sub-brands like Fall Line Kids, Youth Macon, the Dream Center, and small groups; boosting event participation to strengthen community connections; and expanding online giving to support ministry growth. Together, these insights provide a clear roadmap for enhancing the church’s brand, engagement, and mission in South Macon.

# Industry Report

Faith-based organizations operate in a dynamic sector that requires a blend of traditional values and modern marketing strategies to engage diverse audiences. Fall Line Church, a prominent local institution in Macon, Georgia, is uniquely positioned as a hub for community outreach and spiritual growth through initiatives like the Dream Center. By integrating a robust understanding of public relations, digital tools, and community-focused campaigns, Fall Line Church demonstrates its capability to adapt to regional needs while aligning with global trends in church marketing. Its focus on leveraging social media and brand awareness campaigns for sub-brands such as Fall Line Kids and Youth Macon places it at the forefront of innovative faith-based outreach strategies.

Research reveals that effective communication strategies are central to retaining members and fostering growth within faith-based organizations. Studies emphasize the importance of personalized outreach methods, including direct communication and referrals, as powerful tools for engagement (Webb et al., 1998). This approach not only enhances member satisfaction but also aligns closely with the values of trust and community central to organizations like Fall Line Church. By tailoring communication to meet the specific needs of its members, Fall Line Church can continue to strengthen its role as a trusted community resource.

Another significant finding pertains to the growing role of digital platforms in church marketing. Social media tools such as Facebook are instrumental in connecting with younger audiences and expanding the reach of initiatives (Kgatle, 2018). This aligns with Fall Line Church’s emphasis on social media campaigns for sub-brands and the Dream Center. However, as studies suggest, structured strategies are crucial for integrating influencers and digital campaigns to maintain authenticity and trust (Golan et al., 2021). Fall Line Church’s understanding of SEO and digital tools positions it well to harness these strategies effectively.

In conclusion, Fall Line Church operates in a competitive and evolving industry where a balance of traditional and modern marketing strategies is key to success. By implementing insights from current research and aligning its outreach with community values, the church can strengthen its impact locally and regionally while keeping pace with global trends in faith-based marketing. Its initiatives, such as the Dream Center and sub-brands, underscore its commitment to innovative growth and continued service to its community.

# Situational Analysis

Fall Line Church primarily focuses on young adults and families in Macon, Georgia, particularly in South Macon, an area known for high crime and risks for youth.

# Target Market

The target audience generally consists of individuals aged 20 to 35, especially those who prioritize community involvement, family, and spiritual growth while seeking inclusive and welcoming spaces to foster relationships and enhance their support systems. South Macon's population is mostly African-American, with a median income of approximately $45,000, and it is home to one of the state's lowest-performing elementary schools, making affordability and accessibility crucial for this audience.

The traits of this target audience are a strong emphasis on family-friendly environments and modern communication methods. Fall Line Church is uniquely positioned to meet these needs with its established modern tech, savvy technicians, and variety of programs, including *Fall Line Kids*, *Youth Macon*, and Fall Line Small Groups. These groups have become powerful and consistent resources for the community, providing spiritual strength and encouragement, as well as opportunities for personal growth and community engagement.

Their secondary market is the children of young families (the real deciding factors) who can influence the parents' decisions - and underscore the importance of a family-oriented marketing strategy. The program *Fall Line Kids* caters specifically to this group and offers engaging age-specific activities every Sunday morning and year-round. In fact, According to Fall Line's Lead Pastor, Jordan Battani, stated (at 54 mins) in this sermon that Fall Line Kids is their fastest-growing demographic (Battani, [Fall Line Church] 2024, Youtube).

## Buyer Persona

Jasmine Brown is a 32-year-old nurse living in South Macon, Georgia. As a dedicated healthcare professional, her demanding schedule leaves her limited time for personal pursuits. Despite her busy life, Jasmine is deeply committed to her family. She has two children, ages 4 and 7, and prioritizes their spiritual and social growth. For Jasmine, finding a supportive and inclusive community where her children can thrive is essential. Jasmine is driven by a desire to foster personal development and build meaningful relationships with those in her church community. Some of her significant challenges include finding affordable, high-quality activities for her children, and her long work hours, which often leave her feeling disconnected from local resources. This disconnect motivates her to seek out family-focused programs that are accessible and community-oriented.

Jasmine’s communication preferences lean heavily toward convenience. She prefers receiving updates through social media and text messages, allowing her to stay informed quickly amidst her busy schedule. Jasmine embodies the values of community, inclusivity, and family connection. Her goals and pain points reflect her dual roles as a dedicated professional and a nurturing parent, making her a key audience for organizations aiming to provide meaningful and accessible community programs.

Jasmine’s secondary buyers are her two children, ages 4 and 7. While they are not decision-makers, their needs and preferences heavily influence Jasmine’s choices and evaluation of community programs. She seeks environments where her kids feel welcomed, safe, and excited to participate. This makes Fall Line Kids and their Dream Center a strong fit, as they offer tailored activities that support children’s needs while meeting Jasmine’s desire for inclusive and community-driven experiences.

By recognizing Jasmine’s children as secondary buyers, organizations like Fall Line Church can create programming and messaging that appeal to both parents and their kids, ensuring a holistic family experience.

## SWOT Analysis

Fall Line Church has several factors that influence its current and future success.

**Strengths:**  
Fall Line Church’s strengths lie in its established presence within the local community and its diverse programming aimed at families. The church has earned the trust of its members, which is vital for fostering a sense of community and belonging. Its family-oriented programs, such as Fall Line Kids and Youth Macon, cater to the needs of various age groups, providing opportunities for engagement. This programming enhances the church's ability to attract and serve families, positioning it as a cornerstone in the local faith-based community.

**Weaknesses:**  
Despite its strengths, Fall Line Church faces challenges with its online engagement and digital strategy. Currently, the church has limited online interaction, which inhibits its ability to reach potential new members beyond the immediate community. Furthermore, its digital strategy is inconsistent, (despite a visually appealing website) with a lack of cohesion across its online social presence. This fragmented approach weakens the church's ability to build a unified, compelling online identity and effectively engage with its congregation through digital channels.

**Opportunities:**

Fall Line Church has significant opportunities to grow and expand its outreach, particularly through digital channels. By increasing its presence on social media and refining its digital strategy, the church can broaden its reach and engage with a larger, more diverse audience. Additionally, the church can further promote and expand its family-focused programs, such as Fall Line Kids and Youth Macon, increasing their visibility and encouraging more families to participate. This would not only enhance the church’s impact but also help to secure its future by appealing to younger generations.

**Threats:**  
Fall Line Church faces several threats in its pursuit of growth. Larger churches in the area like Beulahland Baptist Church with greater resources and higher attendance may pose competition, as they have the capacity to attract more members and offer a wider array of programs and services. Additionally, shifting religious trends, particularly among younger demographics, threaten to reduce overall religious participation. As younger people increasingly disengage from traditional church activities, Fall Line Church must adapt its strategies to maintain and grow its audience. This includes embracing digital tools to better connect with younger members and staying attuned to their changing preferences. Below is a simple example of the SWOT Analysis.

**Figure 1: SWOT Matrix**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Helpful** | **Harmful** |
| **Internal** | **Strengths**  **-Established community presence**  **-Diverse programming catered to families** | **Weaknesses**  **-Limited online engagement**  **-Inconsistent digital strategy** |
| **External** | **Opportunities**  **-Expanding digital outreach via social media**  **-Increasing awareness of programs like Fall Line Kids & Youth Macon** | **Threats**  **-Larger churches with higher engagement & attendance**  **-Shifting religious trends among younger demographics** |

## Competitive Analysis

Fall Line Church’s main competitors include larger churches with stronger online platforms and secular community centers offering family activities designed to attract everyone, regardless of religious preferences. There are several churches nearby, but it's largest competitor is the Beulahland Baptist Church, and a secular competitor is the Bloomfield-Gilead Recreation Center down the street. But, unlike its competitors, Fall Line Church emphasizes a personal, small-group approach and localized outreach for niched needs in the community (like building beds for waiting households), differentiating itself as a hub for both spiritual connections and social needs.

# Primary Research Plan

## The primary research plan aims to answer critical PR questions for Fall Line Church, particularly around increasing awareness of the church's programs. By exploring community awareness and understanding what messaging resonates most with young adults and families, this research will guide the church in refining its outreach efforts. The study will focus on gathering both quantitative data on awareness levels and qualitative insights into program appeal, providing a comprehensive understanding of the church’s community engagement.

## Method

## This mixed-method approach will incorporate online surveys and in-person focus groups to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The surveys will target individuals aged 20 to 40 in South Macon, who are more likely to engage with church programs and digital content. Participants will be recruited via social media and emailed to ensure a broad reach. In addition, focus groups will consist of 8-10 participants who will be selected from local schools, community events, and church activities to represent a diverse cross-section of the target demographic. These focus groups will take place in person to facilitate deeper discussions. The combination of surveys and focus groups will allow for a well-rounded understanding of community awareness and preferences.

## Protocol

## The survey will include several questions designed to measure engagement with Fall Line Church’s programs and preferences regarding their target audience within the local community. Sample questions will include:

## Are you aware of Fall Line Church’s programs? If so, which ones?

## What types of community programs do you prioritize for yourself and your family?

## How do you prefer to receive updates from local organizations?

## The focus groups will explore participants' perceptions of the church’s accessibility and its messaging, examining the effectiveness of current communication strategies and the church’s online presence. These discussions will help clarify what young adults and young families in South Macon seek in local church programs and how they engage with them. Surveys will be distributed in the first two weeks of the study, with focus groups conducted in weeks 3-5. The final week will be dedicated to analyzing the data and compiling the findings. This research is necessary to understand the South Macon community's awareness and perceptions of Fall Line Church. This primary research will provide data to help Fall Line Church refine its outreach strategies and better connect with its community.

## Timing

## It is recommended that this research be conducted over a 6-week period, beginning with survey distribution in the first two weeks. Focus groups should take place in weeks 3-5, allowing for ample time to gather qualitative data. The final week will be dedicated to data analysis and reporting, which will provide actionable insights to Fall Line Church. Since this study will inform future PR strategies, the timing ensures that the church has sufficient information for adjustments to its digital strategy and outreach efforts in the coming months.

## Conclusion

# This study is crucial for helping Fall Line Church address its PR challenges, particularly in increasing awareness and strengthening it's digital strategy. By understanding the community’s current awareness of the church's programs and the types of messaging that resonate most with young adults and families, Fall Line Church can tailor its outreach to better meet the needs of its target audience. The data gathered from both the surveys and focus groups will provide the church with valuable insights to improve its digital and in-person engagement strategies, ultimately helping it to achieve its PR goals and strengthen its connection with the South Macon community.

# References

Fall Line Church [Fall Line Church]. (2024, October 6). *Worth the Wait - Vision Sunday 2024 - Jordan Battani* (By J. Battani [Fall Line Church]) [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved October 10, 2024, from https://www.youtube.com/live/XYnB21XymL4

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**Annotated Bibliography**

Golan, G., Morehouse, J., & English, A. E. (2021). **Building relationships with the faithful: Examining church communicators’ perceptions of social media influencers in their OPR strategy.** *Journal of Public Relations Research, 33*(4), 296–314. https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2021.2011729  
This study investigates church communicators' perceptions of social media influencers within their public relations strategies. Findings indicate that while social media is valuable for engagement, there is ambivalence about incorporating influencers into communication plans. The study highlights the need for structured strategies to use influencers effectively, providing insights for churches aiming to modernize their outreach efforts.

Kgatle, M. S. (2018). **Social media and religion: Missiological perspective on the link between Facebook and the emergence of prophetic churches in Southern Africa.** *Verbum et Ecclesia, 39*(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v39i1.1848  
This article examines how Facebook facilitates the rise of prophetic churches in Southern Africa. The study focuses on the role of social media in enhancing religious engagement and community building. It also discusses challenges associated with digital platforms and provides practical recommendations for optimizing their use in religious contexts.

Mulyanegara, R. C., Tsarenko, Y., & Mavondo, F. (2011). **Church marketing: The effect of market orientation on perceived benefits and church participation.** *Services Marketing Quarterly, 32*(1), 60–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332969.2011.533100  
This study explores how market orientation affects perceived benefits and participation among congregants. The findings suggest that a strong market orientation improves member satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. This research provides evidence of the importance of aligning church activities with congregants' needs.

Vokurka, R. J., McDaniel, S. W., & Cooper, N. (2002). **Church marketing communication methods: The effect of location and impact on growth.** *Services Marketing Quarterly, 24*(1), 23–37. https://doi.org/10.1300/J396v24n01\_02  
This article investigates marketing communication methods used by Southern Baptist Convention churches. It highlights the effectiveness of personal outreach techniques, such as visitor calls and direct communication, in driving growth. The research underscores the importance of employing diverse communication strategies, particularly in urban settings.

Webb, M. S., Joseph, W. B., Schimmel, K., & Moberg, C. R. (1998). **Church marketing: Strategies for retaining and attracting members.** *Journal of Professional Services Marketing, 17*(2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1300/J090v17n02\_01  
This exploratory study examines the use of personalized communication methods in retaining and attracting church members. The findings reveal that referrals and direct mail are particularly effective strategies. The study offers valuable insights into enhancing member engagement through tailored outreach efforts.