



April 2007

Catholic School Enrollment Talk

ISPD is your Catholic School Enrollment Solution for maintaining and/or increasing the quantity, quality, or diversity of your elementary or secondary Catholic school enrollment.

"The Question Behind the Question - QBQ"

By John Cooper, ISPD Enrollment Specialist

John Miller, author of the book *QBQ - Question Behind the Question* maintains that our personal accountability at work and in life begins with the questions we ask. Questions can either lead us to discover answers that are followed by productive solutions, or they can leave us floundering and wallowing in our own self-pity. We can choose to be movers and shakers or we can be victims.

Many schools assign summer reading to their students. I suggest that schools assign the book *QBQ* to their staff and faculty. Even the best of us get trapped in moments of asking the wrong question. Teachers ask questions like, why did I get stuck with this student or group of students? When will I get a better group of students to work with? Who recruited these students in the first place? Instead, we might be better off asking, how can I do my job of teaching better today regardless of what students I have? What can I do to improve the situation in my class? How can I support the enrollment efforts at my school so that we can recruit and retain classes with optimal quantity, quality, and diversity?

Speaking of Questions - What Questions Should You Be Asking Right Now About Your School's Enrollment Effort at this Time of the Year?

I often refer to tuition as the "silent killer" of Catholic school enrollment. This is the time of the year when the "silent killer" is most infecting our schools. If the challenge of paying tuition is the disease that plagues our Catholic schools, we can choose to begin to address it by doing what every good doctor does; we ask the patient questions relating to the symptoms. Let's pretend that you are in enrollment medical school and I am your enrollment professor. **Here are the questions I would ask you:**

1. Do you know both your prospective and current school families well enough to identify their symptoms related to paying tuition? Have you asked them about any symptoms related to financial fatigue?

2. Did you act as a good enrollment doctor in recording these symptoms in their file (database or hard copy) so that you can quickly refer to their situation? Were you careful to maintain issues of privacy that families expect about their financial disclosures?
3. In those cases where financial assistance was part of your remedy, did you offer them the medicine in a timely manner or did you tell them that it would take weeks before a third party evaluates their financial need?
4. As they waited to hear about financial assistance, did you take a holistic approach to their care by offering them a promising picture of how much healthier they will be in your Catholic school (body, mind, and spirit)?
5. When they heard the results of their financial picture, did you merely offer it to them in a letter or did you follow-up with a more human touch by calling them or arranging a one-on-one meeting with them? In the medical field, it is called good "bedside manners." In the Church, we call this being "Christ-like" in loving our neighbor.
6. When their financial virus continued after a financial package was identified for them, did you continue to search for a cure?
7. In searching for cures to diseases, medical researchers often find breakthroughs when analyzing patterns in how the disease infects groups of people. Does your Catholic school regularly pull together and analyze the financial data of both those who chose to enroll as well as those who did not? People with good business minds are part of our Catholic school communities. Do you effectively utilize those with business expertise to research cures related to financing tuition or the leveraging for tuition assistance?
8. Even if you can honestly say that you know those self identified persons and their aches and pains associated with tuition, how many of people never made themselves known to your school because of either a perceived or real issue related to tuition? Any good medical doctor will tell you that early detection of an illness is extremely important.
9. What could you have done via all your communications to surface those persons who count themselves out even before they give you a chance at remedying their financial dilemma? When a prospect visits your web site, picks up your brochure, reads about you in the parish bulletin, calls your school, visits your school, or in any way makes contact, do they receive adequate information relating to tuition? Do they simply receive the "nuts and bolts" information?

If you did not have a positive answer to these questions, you have work to do. Getting these questions onto your school radar screen is the first step. Just as medical researchers are positive about the progress they are making toward cures to diseases like cancer, we have reason to be hopeful in addressing the tuition burdens that plague many to whom our Catholic schools wish to serve.

A Catholic School Web Site to Watch

Holy Angels School in Dayton, Ohio

www.holyangelsdayton.com

Schools often want to know how to best to publicize their standardized test scores. Some time ago I was visiting the web site of Holy Angels School in Dayton, Ohio. I was impressed with how they highlighted their test scores. They give enough information about the test, but not too much to confuse or bore the visitor. The graphic chart they use to present their scores is very well done. I would recommend leading with the graphic chart and then following up with the explanation. Depending on the stickiness (time that a visitor stays on your site) of your web page, the visitor may miss the chart if it is at the bottom of the web page.

- [Click here to visit Holy Angels School's test score page.](#)

Spiritual Thought

In these 50 days of Easter, the Church devotes particular scriptural attention to the Acts of the Apostles. In it we learn about St. Paul's conversion and his work to spread Christianity. Where would Christianity be today without the missionary zeal of St. Paul? Where would Christianity be if St. Paul used the same approach that many in Catholic parishes and schools use today to recruit families?

Here are three things that those involved in Catholic school recruitment can learn from the work of St. Paul:

1. St. Paul understood marketing. He connected the Christian message (the Good News of the Gospels) to the needs of the communities he entered. Both current and prospective families form the community where you are addressing the Good News of the Gospels. How are you connecting the needs of your community with the Good News of what your school has to offer?
2. Good marketing is good communication. Do you think that St. Paul would have been as successful in spreading the Good News of the Resurrection if he had not responded sufficiently to requests for information? Look at how many letters he wrote to the various Christian communities that he started. How would you rate your proactive communication with prospective families?
3. Good communication is good service. Throughout his ministry, St. Paul talks about and demonstrates what it means to be a servant to the cause of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World challenges us to serve what is good in the world. What is better than a family wanting to share their faith with their children through a Catholic school education? Communication serves when it anticipates and proactively addresses the challenges and anxieties of those deciding to enroll in a Catholic school. As Pastors, Principals, Admissions/Marketing staff, and Parents, you are ministers of the Good News of what your school can offer the world.

What system do you have in place at your school to insure the Good News is spread in the spirit of St. Paul? Your enrollment depends on your answer! The future of the Church depends on it!!!

SPRING 2007 WORKSHOPS for Schools

Dynamic presenters share proven strategies and discuss Catholic school enrollment issues during one and two day seminars. These workshops are conveniently held across the country at an affordable price of \$69-\$250 .
We hope you'll join us soon!

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or call us today at 1-800-299-2393

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Catholic School Enrollment Solutions - Strategies That Deliver Immediate Results
- Best First Steps to Take in Beginning Your Catholic Development Efforts
- "Show Me the Money!" - Capital Campaigns That Produce Results
- Charge Up Your Development Battery!
- Catholic School Enrollment Solutions - Strategies for Catholic School Enrollment Growth

ISPD Also Conducts On-Site Workshops

Offered to Catholic schools and parishes within a single diocese, these workshops are designed to meet your specific needs.

- [Check Here for More Information on ISPD Development Training Workshops](#)

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