



INSTITUTE OF SCHOOL & PARISH DEVELOPMENT

*Bringing People, Process, and Ministry Together to Build the  
Kingdom of God.*

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## **Enrollment Talk**

### **Creating and Implementing Your Enrollment Management Plan for 2011-2012: Part I**

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As the anticipation of a bright school year begins and needed preparations are made, school leaders must also focus on an essential element -- the Enrollment Management Plan.

Enrollment Management, as defined by David Crockett of Noel-Levitz, is *an institution-wide, comprehensive, research-driven system designed to locate, attract, and retain the students the institution wishes to serve.*

At ISPD, we speak of the Enrollment Management Process as a systematic and strategic approach to identify, invite and engage prospective parents and students in the mission and vision of your school. Once they are students, we must sustain retention efforts that lead to a meaningful relationship as active Alumni.

Thus, Enrollment Management is a key component in the “system” of development activities. Enrollment Management is strategic, which relies on good research, clear goals, quality marketing, effective leadership and weekly accountability and tracking (action plan).

An important group to the success of the Enrollment Management Plan is the faculty and staff. In essence, these stakeholders are the school’s ambassadors. They are the instructional, spiritual and marketing leaders of the school. They are here to serve

the customer. By building a customer service culture and practicing innovation, Catholic schools will be their best and attract others.

## **The Ten Truths of Enrollment Management**

In order to be successful in the Enrollment Management Process, there are ten truths that must be understood by all school leaders: pastor, principal, faculty, staff and parent leaders.

### **✓ Truth #1:**

Enrollment Management is a Catholic school's #1 priority when it is understood to mean...

- Good marketing (evangelization);
- Loading and channeling the right quantity, quality and diversity of students through the school's enrollment funnel;
- Systematic, seamless communication that focuses on relationship Building;
- Retention (satisfaction) and continued connection after graduation.

### **✓ Truth #2:**

Just as Jesus formed a community of faith to carry out His ministry, so also Catholic schools must invite, involve and train an Enrollment Management Team.

### **✓ Truth #3:**

Effective Enrollment Management starts from the inside (principal, teachers, staff, students and parents) and works outward to marketing strategies and tactics.

### **✓ Truth #4:**

Catholic school communication (story telling) must systematically and seamlessly reach out and build relationships with prospective families by helping them to identify, aspire, anticipate and experience what is in it for them.

### **✓ Truth #5:**

Families choose not once a year, but each and every day to be a part of a Catholic school community. Regularly measuring how strongly families feel about their Catholic school choice is essential. Highly satisfied families impact the level of self-promotion within the school in ways that a billboard could never do.

✓ **Truth #6:**

Tackling the “silent killer” of enrollment, which is tuition, means assessing the methods used to impact real and/or perceived value and affordability.

✓ **Truth #7:**

One of the primary functions of a Catholic school website is to serve as a 24/7 marketing tool for prospective families.

✓ **Truth #8:**

With the scarce resources Catholic schools have at their disposal, every marketing strategy must be directed to the right targeted audience in as compelling a way as possible. This should be done in a manner that measures return on investment (ROI).

✓ **Truth #9:**

Every student matters. Grade-by-grade retention goals are essential. It takes three to nine positive comments to offset one negative comment. Failing to matriculate to completion equates to a negative statement.

✓ **Truth #10:**

Enrollment Management planning with key stakeholders in a Catholic school expands the circle of involvement and input, leading to strategic action and a greater sense of school community ownership.

## **The Enrollment Management Plan for 2011-2012**

By understanding the above ten truths, we are now ready to create the Enrollment Management Plan for 2011-12. As enrollment is the life-blood of the school, allowing school leaders to continue the mission of Catholic education, the Enrollment Management Plan is comparable on scale to the Curriculum Plan, the Emergency Plan, the Long-Range Strategic Plan and accreditation documents. It is professionally created utilizing research, best practices and is funded by the school’s budget. It is executed, tracked and evaluated by school leadership on a weekly basis.

*September issue: The Ten Steps to Creating the Enrollment Management Plan for 2011 - 2012*