



INSTITUTE OF SCHOOL & PARISH DEVELOPMENT

*Bringing People, Process, and Ministry Together to Build the*

*Kingdom of God.*

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## **Enrollment Talk**

# **Writing the School Marketing Plan – An Essential Element in the Enrollment Management Process**

*By*

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In some circles, both business and education, there is an ongoing debate between public relations and marketing. Are they the same or different? How do they function and how do we make appropriate distinctions?

At ISPD, we believe that these are distinct and related. Let me clarify. In a school environment, we see public relations as all activities that connect with and impact the public – the consumer – and the need to build relationships (relations). Marketing recognizes the merit of these relationships and creates strategies to build and sustain beneficial, value-based exchanges.

*Public relations is the game and marketing is the game plan and playbook.*

The result of quality public relations is a school brand that is viable and influences a favorable impression that sustains the mission of the institution.

Marketing and communications carry the burden and responsibility of securing raving fans.

Now, let's look at the Marketing Plan.

Recognized as an essential element in the Enrollment Management Process, the purpose of the Marketing Plan is to promote and advance the mission and vision of the school – cultivating a positive image and perception. The Marketing Plan is strategic, tactical and measurable, employing proven strategies that are design to sustain enrollment and cultivate quality relationships.

On a practical level, the desired function of the Marketing Plan is to fill the enrollment funnel with inquiries. Once a family is officially recognized as interested, the focus must be on providing a series of personalized contact strategies to move the prospect from inquiry to applicant.

Thus, the four objectives of Marketing Plan are:

- 1) Projecting a positive image
- 2) Attracting new students
- 3) Retaining students
- 4) Sustaining quality relationships with parishioners, parents, alumni, businesses and friends

In creating the school Marketing Plan, let's look at some considerations and key points:

**Key Point #1:**

School administration must understand the value of quality public relations and marketing.

**Key Point #2:**

The faculty and staff must make a commitment to sustain a culture of customer service.

**Key Point #3:**

School administration must understand the state of the local and regional educational marketplace.

**Key Point #4:**

School administration must conduct an honest assessment of the school.

**Key Point #5:**

Establish the Enrollment Management Team to lead the process.

**Key Point #6:**

The Marketing Plan is created and driven by clear targets, goals and a budget.

**Key Point #7:**

The message of the school is agreed upon and clear strategies are executed and evaluated. Pay attention to key points of contact: school receptionist, web site content, school information packet, social media, etc.

**Key Point #8:**

Everyone – administration, board members, parents, faculty, staff, students, parishioners, alumni, etc. – are marketing ambassadors for the school.

**Key Point #9:**

The Marketing Plan is flexible and able to adjust to market changes, demographic shifts, school issues and emerging best practices.

**Key Point #10:**

The most effective marketing tool is positive word of mouth and these conversations are happening through social media. Be proactive and lead the conversation.

With these key points in mind, we are now ready to cover the steps in the creation of the Marketing Plan:

- Step #1: School Leadership Makes Commitment to Marketing
- Step #2: School Faculty Understand the Value of a Customer Service Culture
- Step #3: Establish the Marketing and Enrollment Management Team
- Step #4: Affirm the Mission Statement and Core Values
- Step #5: Understand the Educational Marketplace
- Step #6: Conduct School **SWOT** Analysis
- Step #7: Establish Marketing Targets, Goals and Budget
- Step #8: Create Measurable Outcomes and Evaluation
- Step #9: Define Areas of Quality
- Step #10: Identify the Message
- Step #11: Create Marketing Strategies
- Step #12: Determine Priorities
- Step #13: Create Action Plan and Assignments
- Step #14: Execute Marketing Strategies
- Step #15: Sustaining Momentum

By following these steps, the Marketing Plan will come to life in an environment that celebrates a culture of customer service, recognizes that we are all marketing

ambassadors and that all these positive activities contribute to our ability to sustain quality relationships. The mission and vision is alive and well.

*For more information on Enrollment Assessments and/or Workshops  
Please contact the ISPD office 800.299.2393.*

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## **Spiritual Thought**

*A Clear Vision: Loving God, I ask You to inspire me with creative ideas and a clear vision for my life.*

*With a clear vision and prepared to accept the divine possibilities of my life, I release all to God and remind myself to be open and to cooperate with God's plan for me.*

*As if transported on the wings of a grateful spirit, I move from the oppressive concerns of daily life to being one with God in creating peace, harmony and order.*

*May this clear vision prepare me for a divine reality.*