



INSTITUTE OF SCHOOL & PARISH DEVELOPMENT

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

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Enrollment Talk

Using Cutting-Edge Technology in Your Catholic School Marketing Efforts

By

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It was great to see many of you at NCEA in New Orleans in April. It was impressive to have so many wonderful marketing and Enrollment Management related presentations.

In my presentation I referenced that Catholic schools should consider integrating QR codes in their print marketing materials. Later that evening at the ISPD hospitality event, Joe Hoag, former development director for the Diocese of Erie engaged me in a discussion about QR codes and PURLS. Joe is now using these technologies in his work with Cathedral Corporation (jhoag@cathedralcorporation.com 800-504-1084).

In this month's Enrollment Talk Newsletter, I have asked Joe Hoag to explain both of these technologies and how Catholic schools might incorporate them into their marketing efforts. Here's his overview of how these technologies can drive prospective students/families to your Catholic school's website.

Marketing to your target audience is all about personalization, frequency and communication touch points - like print and electronic media. With new and innovative technologies, you can now reach your audience at a different level.

Marketing solutions, like QR, "Quick Response" and PURLs (personalized URLs), can help you attract families to your catholic school that utilize both web-based marketing and direct mail.

QR, "Quick Response" or "two-dimensional," codes are special barcodes that can be read by Smart phones and link users directly to mobile content such as a video or website.



Sam Sample, [scan this code](#)
with your mobile devices
or go to
samsample.stXYZschool.com
for more information.

To scan a QR code, the user simply downloads a free scanning application from an app store onto their smart phone. When the app is opened, it opens the phone's camera to "scan" the code. Once the code is scanned, the user's phone browser will automatically redirect the person to the content. It is that simple.

With an ever-growing number of people using mobile phones to access the Internet, it's important that schools consider strategies that utilize mobile technologies. Because QR Codes provide immediate access to mobile information and allow instant interaction, they are a great addition to any print marketing or advertising campaign.

Although fairly easy to create, many online generators can produce them for free, but these free versions don't perform to full potential. When using QR codes, here are some things to remember:

1. Your school website must be mobile friendly. If your site uses Flash, your site will not be visible on most smart phones.
2. Be sure you can track the results. If using QR codes in marketing and advertising efforts, consider a campaign management platform to track usage, measure effectiveness and analyze results for maximum impact.

If you are having any doubts about using them, consider that QR-code scanning rose a whopping 1,200% from July to December 2010. It is estimated that by the end of 2012, 80% of cell phones in use will be Smart phones. QR codes create a "wow factor" while also getting traffic to your school website.

A PURL (personalized URL) is basically a website whose content is tailored to a specific individual or family. This tailoring is done through the use of variable fields, images and pages that are linked to a database that contains information about each potential visitor. An example of a PURL is a web page with a URL such as www.samsample.StXYZSchool.com. Sam Sample would be the recipient of a direct mail piece with that web address included. The messaging would encourage Sam to visit that site. For each recipient on the list, the web address is unique to them, as is the content of the web page.

By incorporating PURLs instead of mailing the same old generic brochure, the recipient can choose to view a completely customized web page, personalized just for them. People respond to their own names. In fact, medical studies have shown that the human brain reacts differently when a person hears or sees their name! What a great way to make a prospective parent/student feel special.

Both are technologies that parents and students would be very comfortable with using. And unlike other marketing avenues, such as billboards, TV commercials, radio spots and emails — which are all competing for a prospects' attention and loyalty — direct mail is the only channel that physically gets into people's hands in their homes. And a personalized URL and or QR code placed on a direct mail piece maximizes the power of the Internet for that medium.

Again there is a “wow factor” to those receiving a PURL. For a prospective high school student, can you imagine their response upon receiving a post card in the mail with a web address with their name on it. There is a good chance they will visit that site with information about your high school personalized to them. Consider one sent to your prospective parents. Chances are pretty good they are under the age of 35, which means they get most of their information over the Internet. A PURL and/or QR code can direct them right to sites with information about your school.

Uses for these two technologies are only limited by your creativity. Enrollment management and marketing both require an investigative personality. Look at these and other technologies on the market today and ask yourself how they can be used to load your school’s enrollment funnel with new prospects.

Spiritual Thought

Can’t you imagine St. Paul using QR codes and PURLs to evangelize to the church communities he established? How about this PURL? www.barnabas.churchinantioch.com