



January 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.

“Enrollment Management: A Catholic School’s Number One Priority!”

By John Cooper, ISPD Enrollment Specialist

As Catholic School Week is celebrated in the United States, it might be beneficial to spend some quality time prioritizing what we do to keep our school ministry healthy and vibrant. **Let me help you get started. Enrollment management is your Catholic school’s number one priority.** Everything flows from the way we manage enrollment. For far too long, work related to enrollment has been viewed as one of the many things competing for our time, energy, and money.

Enrollment management is not an option. It is an absolute necessity! When placed in its proper context, enrollment management is actually the vehicle through which we carry out our school’s important ministry.

If enrollment management is so important, what does it involve? **Enrollment management involves marketing.** Taken in the context of our faith, marketing is essentially evangelization. Evangelization is at the heart of our faith. We evangelize through both the things we do and those things we don’t do. It was not by accident that Jesus had a crowd when he delivered the Sermon on the Mount.

Enrollment management involves a process of attracting the right quantity, quality, and diversity of prospective students into your enrollment funnel. If a sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible reality, then our marketing/evangelization efforts are intended to surface visible signs that a prospective student/family is interested in the Catholic education you have to offer. Jesus was interested in quantity as his message of salvation included more than just his own Jewish people. Jesus was about quality as he asked the rich young man to give up all he had and come follow him. Jesus was about diversity as he ate with tax collectors and sinners.

Enrollment management involves a process of systematically communicating with all those connected to your school including prospective students/families, current students/families, alumni and friends in your school community. This communication is focused on relationship building and service. Jesus was the great communicator. He never gave up on communicating and teaching his disciples, even though they sometimes didn’t get his message. He did not shy away from communicating with those who opposed him. His message was so

compelling that it eventually bridged the boundary of death to eternal life.

Enrollment management involves retention and continued connection after graduation. Once students and families enroll, the promises that were made must be delivered. Students/families choose to stay connected to the extent that we make good on the benefits of quality education, faith based instruction, personal attention, family-like environment, and Christ-centered community living. Jesus established love as the measurement for living the Christian life. He knew that no higher performance measurement could be found than to “love your neighbor as yourself.” The continued support of current students/families, alumni, and friends hinges on whether or not they feel loved before, during, and after they enroll.

If you are having a difficult time getting some of your staff, faculty, parents, alumni, and parishioners on-board with why enrollment management is so important, why not share this Enrollment Talk Newsletter with them? Hopefully, it will help them to understand that their efforts in the area of enrollment management are totally consistent with what our faith calls us to do. Actually, we make our faith come alive when we seek to manage our enrollment.

HELP WANTED: Office of Strategic Enrollment Prevention

Job Description: The Office of Strategic Enrollment Prevention seeks applicants who are skilled at creating processes to prevent enrollment. Minimum qualifications include someone who has worked in a Catholic school and has never questioned the processes or systems that are in place surrounding student enrollment. The ideal candidate will have worked in a Catholic school where he/she has actually instituted processes that have prevented enrollment.

Does this sound strange? Yes, it does. Chet Meisner writes about the Office of Sales Prevention in his book *The Complete Guide to Direct Marketing*. The truth is that many organizations sometimes have in place policies and procedures that actually run counter to their enrolling students. Catholic schools are not immune to this.

Here are a couple enrollment prevention techniques:

1. To prevent incorrect email addresses from entering the database, don't enter any email addresses that are received hand-written.
2. In an effort to qualify “serious” applicants many schools charge an application fee.
3. Answering a phone call from a prospect and completing the conversation without asking for at least their name, address, phone number, and email address.
4. Preferring that prospects contact the school by phone rather than including multiple ways to respond such as an on-line inquiry form on the school web site.

Anyone of us can run into the trap of either creating or participating in processes, policies, and procedures that hinder enrollment. Why not include the “Office of Strategic Enrollment Prevention” as a discussion at your next staff, faculty, or education commission meeting? Don't forget. Jesus questioned a few of the cultural and religious practices of his day.

ISPD Enrollment Blog for Catholic Schools

General Invitation to Blog About Enrollment

Do you have any examples you would like to “blog” about regarding the “Office of Strategic Enrollment Prevention” that you have experienced? We welcome your thoughts, insights, or questions on any of the topics raised in this newsletter or relating to Catholic school enrollment in general.

Email your feedback confidentially to me at jcooperispd@aol.com or share your thoughts with other Catholic school leaders by joining our blog.

- [Click here to join the ISPD Enrollment Solutions Blog](#)

A Catholic School Web Site to Watch

Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, IN

www.cathedral-irish.org/

Last month we showcased an elementary school so this month’s featured web site is Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. One of the things that I like about Cathedral’s recently re-designed site is that it is externally focused on showcasing the school. By creating portals (accessed off the home page) for current students, faculty, and parents, Cathedral is better able to orient its home page content to visiting audiences that are less familiar with it.

- [Click here to visit Cathedral High School](#)

Spiritual Thought

In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus attributes success to how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison. In our enrollment work, we ask:

- Did we feed parents who were hungry for how our school might benefit their children?
- Did we quench the thirst students and parents have for how they will fit into the community by giving them a feel for the school's unique culture, even before they physically set foot in the school building?
- Did our welcoming and inviting communication with school families make them feel less like strangers and more like family?
- Did we reach out to families who felt naked in sharing that they might not be able to afford our school?
- Did we support students and families when they were dealing with sickness and illness?
- Did we reach out to those students and families who felt confined and imprisoned by low self-esteem?

In answering these questions, your school’s uniquely Catholic mission presents you with an opportunity to see the face of God in the students, faculty, and staff with

whom you work.

SPRING 2007 WORKSHOPS

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!

[Register on-line.](#)

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

TOPIC:

Catholic School Enrollment Solutions
Strategies That Deliver Immediate Results

Spring Locations:

** New Orleans, LA & Washington, DC **

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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E-mail: ispd@bellsouth.net
Phone: 800-299-2393
Website: <http://www.ispd.com>

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think could benefit from this information. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please contact us.

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