



November 2009

## *Development Directions*

A free resource for pastors, principals, development directors, volunteers and anyone engaged in the ministry of Catholic development.

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### **Should Catholic Parishes & Schools Really Get Involved in the Social Media (Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter) Craze?**

**By Frank Donaldson, President**

According to my old Marketing 101 textbook, the main focus of public relations and marketing was to spread the word about your products and services in order to get people to purchase. The 5 P's were the main words in order to describe the role of marketing: product, price, place, promotion, and packaging. I can remember using these words and how they apply to Catholic schools in a workshop I did for school principals about 7-8 years ago.

In their book, *Inbound Marketing*, Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah challenge us to think much differently. They cite several examples:

- Five to ten years ago, buying large e-mail lists of "targeted names" and sending promotional materials worked well. Today, with the National Canned Spam Act, this does limit what can be sent and to whom. And, according to Marketing Sherpa, the average open rate for an e-mail blast has gone down from 39% in 2004 to 22% in 2008.
- Ten years ago, spending money on TV and radio was an excellent way to reach a large audience, but with the addition of TiVo/DVRs to skip advertisements, the quantity of TV channels, the rise of video content online, and the emergence of XM/Sirius radio dramatically lowered advertising's reach.
- Ten years ago, letters, publications and newsletters were mailed out; today qualified people are blogging and publications are being sent and read online - especially if that business is able to get their web site linked to others.

Much like the concept of change process in the book *Who Moved My Cheese?* are we ready to learn a whole new way of marketing and reaching people? Where are your alums communicating and finding information today? Where are the young people, ages 16-30, who need to be reached in our Catholic parishes? Where are the families that we need and want to attract to look at our Catholic schools? Where are the donors that Catholic parish and school leaders want to reach? Where do our high school students gather information and communicate with each other?

According to Halligan and Shah, people "shop" and gather information in three main areas:

1. Through search engines such as Google;
2. Through blogosphere and its over 100 million blogs;
3. Through the social mediasphere - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Digg, StumbleUpon, Reddit, YouTube and others.

The ability to become known and effective all depends upon your ability to create *remarkable content*.

The authors believe that people visit websites because they are looking for something interesting that they can read and learn about. They offer three suggestions:

1. Add something collaborative to your website like a blog (which is updated on a regular basis);
2. Start creating lots of compelling content people will want to consume;
3. Start focusing on where the real action is: Google, industry blogs, and social media sites like Facebook.

How-to articles for new Catholic parents and prospective parish families, what to expect features for that pre-K family, short 2-3 minute videos of your students giving a testimonial on their Catholic school, interesting pictures of the dedication of your new church, blogs about your youth ministry program, new creative ideas you are implementing in technology, the latest information on how your graduates are doing as they are linked up to you on Facebook. These are all examples of how the world of communication and marketing is rapidly changing.

Facebook is perhaps the largest and most active social networking site on the Internet. It has more than 200 million users with over 100 million users logging on at least once per day, and the fastest growing demographic of people 35 years and older. As Halligan and Shah emphasize, what makes Facebook's reach particularly powerful is its viral aspect. When individual users join your community on Facebook, their friends see an update in their Facebook home page. This leads to more users joining your community, causing more people to be exposed to your Catholic parish and/or school, and so on. By using this social aspect of Facebook, Catholic institutions have the chance to reach large groups of people - quickly.

All Facebook users have a personal page where they can post information about themselves, post status updates, share information, etc. However, what is now perfect for Catholic institutions is the ability to create a business page - otherwise known as a fan page. Over 4,000,000 users become fans of pages each day!

Getting started on Facebook is easy, but it will require ongoing attention in order to maintain its value, as users expect to see fresh information on your fan page. Once you are up and running, then the next obvious step is to start inviting people to be friends and fans. You can also link your Facebook page from your parish/school web site and from other online materials so you can build reach within your community. However, you do want to be careful as you set up your controls to invite people. Here's why.

As I was creating my own Facebook page with the goal of creating ISPD's fan page, I had trouble

viewing my e-mail list in my personal and professional address book. For some reason, a screen appeared saying that Facebook was having trouble with that action, and that it would be fixed shortly. Well, I made the mistake of pressing a key that invited all 1600 people who were in my address book to be a friend of mine on Facebook. My original intention was to find out how many of those 1600 e-mail addresses had Facebook pages, select the ones I wanted to invite to be friends (because of their connection with ISPD), and then send out the invitation. Didn't work that way. So, out go 1600 invitations to 1600 e-mail addresses - 2/3 of them not having a Facebook page. Some people I had not communicated with in years; some who were members of groups and teams that I had worked with in 1995; some who wrote me back and said, "How do I know you?" And, the list goes on. Although no major damage was done, because people do receive Facebook invitations all the time, it still was not the right way to do things. I guess the good news is that Aunt Bertha now is a friend and I have her recipe for mayhaw jelly, and a gentleman I parted ways with years ago, because of his unethical behavior, is now so happy that I came to my senses and invited him to be my friend again! Oh well, you live and learn. I apologize to anyone who may have been inconvenienced because of my mis-stroke.

This obviously led me to the discovery that much more education and research were necessary on my part, and this is what I have been doing over the past several months - even to the point of hiring a company to create our fan page on Facebook, and a consultant who can come and work with our associates and with our Catholic parishes and schools to educate them for this continuing phenomenon. As David Meerman Scott, author of *The New Rules of Marketing and PR* says, "We're living a revolution!" and, as he says, this revolution is coming alive:

- . . . in the way people communicate;
- . . . in the way people find products and choose companies to do business with;
- . . . in the way companies and institutions are attracting our attention.

The rules have changed. According to Scott, those who have grown up and continue to stick with traditional marketing education that focused on the 5 Ps, then you need to re-think. Those who have an MBA, or have trained on the job, you've got to unlearn and pick up some new skills. It is called ***inbound marketing***, and the great news is that anybody can do it, and it does not require a lot of money, but it does require an investment of time and creativity. And, if we don't think it works, then - regardless of our political preference - this is what elected our latest president. Americans were able to connect with Obama via his blog, Facebook page (5,800,000 supporters and counting), Twitter (450,000 followers and counting), LinkedIn (13,000 members and counting), and YouTube (21,000,000 views and counting) among other social networks and web sites.

Back with we started ISPD in 1989, everything was all about building facilities with fiber optic cables; using technology to create databases; and sending out newsletters through direct mail. Ten years later in 1999, it was all about laptops and websites; ten years after that in 2009, it was all about setting up e-commerce; and, here it is not even into the second decade of the century and we have a major revolution that is staring us in the face. For all Catholic leaders, there is a place on this boat - in some kind of way. The main thing to remember is that the boat is about to leave the dock. We hope, after doing your research and homework, you will be on board.

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## December 8, 2009 Webinar to Focus on People Engagement in Tough Economic Times

ISPD will offer a year-long series of \$39 sixty minute Webinars on Catholic Development.

Listed here are our upcoming Webinars:

- **"25 Ways to Engage People into the Life of Your Catholic Institution"**  
December 8, 2009
- **"Organizing and Implementing the Total Stewardship Process"**  
January 14, 2010
- **"How to Invite the Gifts"**  
February 22, 2010
- **"Getting Your Parish and/or School Ready for a Capital Campaign"**  
March 9, 2010
- **"Integrating Total Quality and Customer Service into Your Catholic Development Efforts"**  
April 22, 2010
- **"Hosting a Gift Reception"**  
May 5, 2010
- **"How to Effectively Host Input Sessions and Town Hall Meetings"**  
June 8, 2010

- [Register for a Webinar Now!](#)

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## ISPD 2010 Mardi Gras Development School



In case you haven't heard, we are bringing back the most popular three day workshop ISPD has ever introduced - the ISPD Mardi Gras Development School which will be held at De La Salle High School on February 3, 4 and 5, 2010.

The ISPD Development School will have many advantages:

- At a Catholic high school located directly on St. Charles Avenue on the streetcar line
- Numerous hotels up and down the streetcar line where attendees can stay and simply ride the streetcar to De La Salle High School
- Over 15 courses on Catholic Development, Advancement, People Engagement and Total Stewardship
- Many presenters - ISPD associates and guest presenters from throughout the country
- Mardi Gras parades beginning the day the Development School is over

- Park bench sessions with presenters
- ISPD socials
- Networking luncheon
- Plus much more

Make your plans & mark your calendar for a great time in New Orleans!

- [Click here for more details & list of courses on Mardi Gras Development School](#)

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## Visit our ISPD Web Site for Free Resources

- Educational DVDs on Catholic Development
- Development Job Postings across the country
- Monthly Newsletter Archives
- Library of Development Articles

- [Visit Our ISPD Website Now!](#)

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The Institute of School and Parish Development (ISPD) is a national, Catholic development consulting firm created to serve Catholic schools, parishes and dioceses in the areas of planning, marketing, fund-raising, and resource development.

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