

5 MARKETING MISTAKES CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS ARE MAKING RIGHT NOW

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Correct course
before next year!



E N C O U R A G E M E N T

It is never too late to change course! Whether you are reading this in the beginning of 3Q or in the last month of the year, you can make some changes and get on track for next year. This FREE download will point out the 5 most common problems that Christian schools are making this year (and have been making for many years). But rather than leaving you feeling bad about yourself, I want to offer suggestions on getting on track to realizing the enrollment growth you have been wanting.

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click on the link below to go deeper, get some help, and grow your school!



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J U S T S T O P I T !

1

INTERRUPTION MARKETING

If you are shootin' from the hip, haphazardly throwing your budget around on worthless advertising and lead-generating tools, you are doing it the old way. The former ways of marketing are based on what we now can call them "interruption marketing". This pushes our product into the faces of our audience, assuming they will drop what they are doing and pay attention. But does that work with you? Do you record or DVR your favorite TV shows? Why? So that you can forward through the commercials, right?

In today's contemporary communication culture, so heavily influences by our social platforms, you need to consider how your school is marketing itself. Are you maintaining tired and traditional forms of marketing while you personally engage in other ways? Seriously, if you toss most direct mail into the trashcan, why would you suspect your prospective families would treat your Open House marketing materials any differently?

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J U S T S T O P I T !

2

TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF ALL THE TIME

Communication is 2-way yet schools (and businesses are just as much a culprit as anyone) focus on promoting themselves more than they focus on their audience. Especially online, remember this mantra:

"It's SOCIAL media - not PROMOTIONAL media."

Even in traditional marketing materials, your marketing kit and direct mail pieces, are you talking about the needs, problems, pains, frustrations or fears of your prospective families? Probably not (based on what I have seen). Unfortunately, because you have been trained that these printed materials should talk about you, schools often transfer this soliloquy strategy over to social.

If you were sitting in a small group meeting at church, how would you feel if someone came in, stood on a table, and started talking with a very loud voice all about them. Pretty annoying, huh? When it comes to social media, do not make your conversation all about you. Consider what your audiences is struggling with, talking about or concerned with figuring out. When you move from being an interruptive organization in their news feed to a useful resource, you will find people actually listen to what you are saying.

J U S T S T O P I T !

3

CONSIDERING YOUR NEED FOR THEM TO ENROLL WHEN THEY ARE NOT READY

As a Christian school, you desire that God bring you the right kinds of students who can thrive academically and enjoy a faith-building experience at your school. But in admissions (and your Head of School and Board are certainly thinking this way), it is about the numbers. The more seats you fill, the more revenue that is for the school. Without seats filled, how do you continue?

So this often drives our marketing. Like any good salesperson, we focus on getting them to the Open House or Preview Nights on our campus so we can close the deal, right? And for the right kinds of families, who are further along in their discovery, this is the perfect strategy.

But I am suggesting that there are so great families (possibly full-pay families) who you need to be reaching out to, but who are nowhere near enrolling or even attending one of your marketing events. These families know very little about you or may allow barriers to exist because of false beliefs. For example, a family may have grown up thinking private schools were only for wealthy families, so they write themselves out of your story. You know that is not the profile of every family in your school, so how do you bridge the disconnect?

Creating high-value content such a video testimonials, case studies and phone interviews with families can tell the bigger story. You may need to launch an informational campaign to showcase the variety of family profiles at your school in order to attract some new ones.

J U S T S T O P I T !

4

EXPECTING EVERY OPEN HOUSE GUEST TO ENROLL

I am sure I do not need to tell you that not every family that comes to an Open House or Preview Night takes the steps to enroll. While many do, some are not quite ready.

What happens with that family? Will they hear from you again? In many cases, the next time that family hears from you is when you have something else promotional to send them. A friend of mine told me they were new to a city and they checked out a Christian school for their daughter. They were exploring but not yet ready to enroll. They walked through the Open House and filled out an information card.

Do you know what the next point of contact was? They were sent an invitation to give to their school's annual fund? What? Why? Just dropping everyone into a mailing list database is not good.

If you segment your lists correctly, you should send targeted email messages or follow-up letters to families who did not yet enroll. Email marketing is a great way to maintain contact with these families. Getting people into your social databases (i.e., Facebook is one of the best) is a super way of continuing the communication. So at every campus visit, make sure every prospective family gives you their email address and likes your Facebook page!

J U S T S T O P I T !

5

HAVING A LOUSY WORD OF MOUTH SYSTEM

Your absolute best source of referrals is your database of current families. But many of these families are unengaged in the word of mouth system in your school.

You may have asked, "why won't the _____ family tell their friends?" You probably can identify families who are fully satisfied, but have never brought a new family to your school. But do not assume that they are selfish or even lazy.

Telling your friends about any product or service is risky. What if they do not have they same experience as I have - will that hurt our friendship? Realize that may be one reason why some families will not host an event in their home to talk about your school. In addition, there are some families who are more private, passive or maybe just too introverted to say much. And some people just do not like to be perceived as a "salesman" for your school. What can you do?

Social media provides you the opportunity for such families to become quiet ambassadors for your school. Liking photos you post and sharing great articles from your Head of School's blog can be a real tool to engage these families in your WOM system. Providing useful articles (i.e., "Managing the Middle School Years" or "How to Find College Scholarships") can arm such families with non-promotional content that they can easily share with their friends.

A C T I O N S T E P

These are common mistakes that every Christian school makes. If we thought about it, you could probably name a few more. The challenges are numerous.

I invite you to a no-obligation, non-salesy phone consultation with me. I promise not to turn this into any kind of manipulative conversation where I only talk about me. Follow the advice in this ebook, I want to hear about your challenges. And I promise, no matter what, I will provide you 2 practical action steps that you can begin to implement immediately.

Click the link at the bottom of the page (or if they link doesn't work, just visit the website listed) and start the process of scheduling a 30-minute phone consultation with me.
I am eager to help you grow your school.

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Reserve your individual consultation and let's talk!



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