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# 9 STEPS TO MARKETING YOUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

— COACHING PROGRAM —

Most schools practice “shoot-from-the-hip” marketing including reactionary actions without much consideration for future impact.

Are you a hip-shooter?

- **Hip-shooters** allocate resources year-after-year, sometimes never changing the line item, even if the tool has shown little ROI.
- **Hip-shooters** spend marketing money on things “because we can’t afford not to” (meaning: your competitors are doing something so you do it because they are doing it)
- **Hip-shooters** practice copycat marketing, sometimes even without knowing it!

Effective school marketing is a system. Marketing is not only a system, it may be the most important system in any school.

In our coaching program, we will guide you through 9 steps that will offer you a systematic approach to marketing your Christian school.

## Step #1 - Define “Marketing”

If you were to get a room full of Heads of School, admission directors or communication team members and ask them to define “marketing”, you would likely get as many different answers as bodies in the room. We will ensure your entire team understands what marketing is, what it is not, and how understanding the “big picture” will ensure goals are achieved.

## Step #2 - Develop a Communication Strategy

Most schools take the “idea of the week” tactical approach to marketing, tossing money and other resources at the latest fad in marketing (this includes social media, too). However, a good strategy is the most important aspect of any successful marketing implementation, including determining and narrowly defining your ideal client, and creating and communicating key points of differentiation.

## **Step #3 - Understand the 3 Rs of School Marketing**

You cannot spend all your time and money on simply filling seats. This is “addition marketing” where you need “multiplication marketing”! In this step, we will coach your team in understanding the 3 Rs of school marketing: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION and REFERRALS.

The final two Rs, retention and referrals, complete the full marketing cycle. If you simply focus on recruitment, you are “filling seats” which will exhaust your marketing budget and your personal energy. When you realize that enrollment is only part of the process, you can turn your attention to cultivating “**loyal ambassadors**” (families that repeat and refer!)

## **Step #4 - Build a Solid Brand**

Is your overall school brand consistent with the audiences you are trying to reach? A complete overhaul of the visual identity elements may be necessary (this could include an academic seal, a marketing-friendly logo, athletic/mascot identity marks, etc.) We will examine how consistent branding communicates value to families, whereas communication chaos tells a family that you are disorganized, underfunded or lacking in excellence.

Your brand is also more than just a logo or letterhead. It is the representation of your school’s unique story and value. We will ensure you are communicating your school’s brand message to your ideal families the way YOU want them to see it.

## **Step #5 - Recognize that Content is King - Start Publishing Like It**

School marketers today must commit to producing content, much like a publisher might. Prospective families expect to search and find large amounts of useful information, particularly as it relates to their “need, problem, pain, frustration or fear.” This is why STRATEGY still trumps TACTICS every time.

Consistent production of content that builds trust (success stories, testimonials) and content that educates (blog posts, e-books and online seminars) are major components of the new marketing system. We will show you how to produce online and offline content that resonates and tells your school’s story.

## **Step #6 - Be Everywhere Your Audience Is**

Having high-value content is great, but knowing how to reach your ideal family is essential. In this coaching program, we will show you how to pick the right social media channels to use, how to use them most effectively and how this content can act like a magnet for prospective families. We also believe in integrating your offline marketing activities with your online presence and we will show you how to do this to get the most results.

## **Step #7 - Lay Out the Stepping Stones**

We will help your team map out a clear pathway for prospective families, introducing them into your marketing system. Then we help you design a systematic approach to moving a family from KNOW, LIKE, TRUST to ENROLL, RE-ENROLL and REFER. We will teach you how to be intentional, strategic and systematic in your marketing.

## **Step #8 - Identify the Gaps & Assess Your Resources**

In any competitive marketing landscape, you must look at your strengths but also your areas of weakness. We examine with you the entire marketing system and look for gaps and identify the improvement needs. We help you do the hard work of assessment, reinforcement, and any necessary reallocation of funds and personnel to carry out the marketing objectives.

## **Step #9 - Plan and Live By Your Marketing Calendar**

The scarcest resource in any school is time. There is always more to do than possibly can be done. Marketing momentum requires consistent work over the entire school year (and this includes holiday and breaks). Your school marketing is best managed by creating a marketing calendar. We will show your team the tools and methods to ensure your marketing is systematic and efficient.

# 9 STEPS TO MARKETING YOUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

When you follow these 9 steps to marketing your Christian school, you will find yourself with greater confidence that your marketing efforts are systematic, coordinated and achieve the results you want.



**Randy Vaughn**, Christian School Marketing Consultant

**Would you like a FREE 30-minute consultation to discuss this systematic approach to marketing your Christian school?**

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