

POSITION MARKETING

YOUR POSITION

"There's the windup, and here's the pitch!" A ubiquitous phrase heard dozens of times over the course of a typical baseball game, a radio sportscaster usually spends 20-30 seconds before every pitch watching the pitcher position his pitch by maneuvering the baseball secretly within the web of his glove, looking at the catcher, nodding to the signal, glancing at the infield and then ... winding up and throwing his pitch.

There's a lot happening in that half minute prior to pitching a baseball. But is that all it takes to make a good pitch? No doubt the way the pitcher holds the ball, feels the seams, turns a wrist, and rotates his arm, has something to do with it. Speed or lack of it is another major factor.

The same factors, by the way, affect how you deliver an effective marketing position to your client base: parents and grandparents with children that could be enrolled in your school.

For a baseball pitcher, great pitching is all about the strategy preceding the game itself; a strategy invested in a glove, a ball and a process of called balls and strikes. The market for potential students is no different. As a baseball pitcher studies, decides and reviews data prior to a game, your positioning, marketing pitch should be the same. Effective marketing begins with ...

1. Studying the market,
2. Deciding how to position yourself with the your customer base,
3. Reviewing market statistics and sales patterns.

What gives a pitcher the edge? It's the ability to prepare better, work more efficiently, and perform more consistently than the competition; employing a comprehensive, process approach to planning which can become your pathway to marketing success.

TENETS OF POSITION MARKETING

Be succinct. In most cases, you only have a few seconds to capture someone's attention and get your point across. Consistent focus and momentum are your friends.

Tell your story. Humans have been telling tales for thousands of years. Which is why it's a great idea for the flow of your position to follow a narrative pattern.

Focus on benefits. Value beats price every single time. Rather than focus on cost or features, your position needs to focus on the value your product creates.



ASK YOURSELF

- 1. Who's the audience and what's the need?** Treat every marketing opportunity singularly—tailoring your position to the audience and their level of understanding and interest. Audiences change over time. Make sure you know who they are demographically as well as geographically. *Be on top of your lists.*
- 2. What's the challenge?** What challenges is your market facing? If you know, it will make you more credible. Credibility is the foundation for likability. It's been said, "If they don't like you, they won't buy you." *People act on emotion and then justify emotion with reason.*
- 3. Have I explained the product?** Your enrollment product is the greatest tool in your marketing tool belt. What is it and why is it great? Why are you passionate about it? *Do you have the data to show why it's the best investment for your clients?*
- 4. Do I have testimonials?** Being able to demonstrate social proof is an incredible tool to use when positioning yourself as an alternative to public school. *It transfers the clout of the person using your product or service to you and shows potential parents that there is a real market need for what you're doing*
- 5. Do I have a position platform?** You've done the research and gathered the tools and resources. Now it's time to build a winning position platform ... Print, social media, yard signs, banners, posters, podcasts ... *What's the best media mix for the marketing challenge you're facing?*
- 6. What's the opportunity?** Am I taking the opportunity to convince my market that my school will fix their problem? Do they know the problem exists? If so, am I providing the best solution/value proposition? Will my school fix things? *Have I given the market at least three key benefits my solutions provide?*
- 7. Am I the better choice?** Here's where being succinct is a real plus. Ask yourself: Is my model of how to confront the problems with these solutions the best choice for my market? *Your goals and vision, succinctly stated here, are vital.* Why is my school the better choice?
- 8. Do I have data?** Do I really know the competition? The customer? The applicable technology needed to reach the potential parents and grandparents? Do I have a manageable plan in place to move to the next step? Are these steps a meaningful process?
- 9. Can I handle objections?** Am I prepared to address the cost of tuition, long and short term value, competitive advantages or disadvantages of my school? *Am I able to think critically about what my school offers?* A rule of thumb about getting a customer to say "yes" is to be able to handle their objections with grace and ease from the start. Are you ready for that?
- 10. Am I building on positioning experience?** Have you taken a critical look at past marketing pitches positions? What was effective? What was ineffective? Reevaluate your pitch marketing position on a consistent basis. Catholic Schools Marketing has experience in your particular market. We can help you test ideas and hone your position before you wind up and deliver it to your market.

Contact one of our CSM Associates (262-338-8538) and discuss how direct mail marketing and cutting edge print and design strategies can help you plan your next enrollment marketing campaign. We can assist you in the development of a winning marketing plan for your school. When you sell your product or service keep in mind that you are not just selling but you are recruiting customers through a strategy designed to capture their interest, make them think and eventually commit to joining your client team. Contact Catholic Schools Marketing today and see why we always say "We're not the only choice, but we're honestly the right choice."