

REASONABLE MARKETING

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

It's been said that, "Before you eat the elephant, make sure you know what parts you want to eat first." With that bit of wisdom in context, how do you feel right now about your next marketing campaign? For many, marketing is the one big thing nobody really wants to talk about. Marketing IS often the elephant in the room, and not knowing where to start or what to attack first is one of the major reasons schools hesitate to prepare marketing plans.

Nevertheless, if you know what you want to say about your school¹, have a good understanding of the Catholic school market, educated yourself with necessary data and statistics about competitive schools in the area, and reexamined the value of the educational product you offer, you've laid the foundation to talk about the elephant in the room, i.e. you have the necessary resources to put together a strategic process to market your school to the community.

Process? If you're like most folks looking to get their idea, product or service out to the right market, a process is the best way to get you there. Why? Simply, processes work one step at a time. Managing multiple priorities is great, but when each prioritized step is critical, you need to focus. That's the economy of a process.

Compare these internet headlines:

A→ "Why People Follow the Leader" (or) B→ "The 21 Ways of Great Leadership"

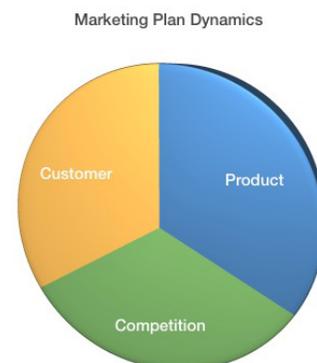
A→ "How to persuade people to change" (or) B→ "6 Principles of Persuasion"

While the "A" headlines are interesting, the "B" headlines are far more likely to pull the reader into the URL. The reason? The "A" headlines imply you'll have some reading to do, while the "B" headlines promise a more summary approach. Summaries imply a momentary focus and a convenient cognitive starting point. It's usually process before study for most people when they're looking to solve their marketing problems.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

So, where does the marketing process begin? It begins with your ability to make sure that your marketing strategy is multidimensional. Does it encompass all aspects of the information that you need to know-including your customer base, enrollment products and what the competition can offer? An efficient, multi-dimensional approach like this will shed light on the "marketing" elephant in the room. Here are the 3- dimensional elements of a good marketing plan:

1. **The Competition.** What other schools are doing?
2. **The Customer.** Who are they? Where are they? How do they think?
3. **The Company.** What is my product and how does it impacts the customer?



LAUNCHING THE CYCLE

It's time to leap from pre-planning to planning, having done due diligences with competitive research, market trends, and company insights. It's the beginning of a strategic planning process that is fluid, always changing in accordance with inbound data, changing customer trends and product diversification.

Establish a marketing process² that carries parents through these 6 essential customer pathways:

1. **Unawareness:** Unaware of your school, perhaps don't even know they need private education. Communicate by giving them opportunities to understand what you offer and how that fits their educational needs.
2. **Contemplation:** They know there's a problem but may be unable or unwilling to address it. Communicate by providing information that will help them solve their problem, with some detail on how your educational product can do that from a competitive basis.
3. **Preparation:** Parents are gathering information about their problem. Communicate by offering solutions based on your educational products that they can apply to their problem and discover a good fit and desired outcomes.
4. **Action:** They're looking to enroll and will make a decision soon. Communicate by developing a proposal to meet their needs that may include samples, open houses.
5. **Exchange:** Parents are ready to become repeat customers³. Now there's a need to communicate at higher level with refined customer service, personal interaction, one-on-one contact.
6. **Advocacy:** Parents are positioned to endorse your school. Communicate by giving them the tools they need to do testimonials and referrals.



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

1 See Best Practices: Preplanning: www.catholicschoolsmarketing.com/white_papers.html.

2 One of the best ways to take a potential customer from unawareness to action is through repetitive direct mail.

3 Newsletters and personal visits are essential here.