Marketing Helps Make It Happen

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Why should you have to market your schools?
Whose district has more competition today than it did just five years ago?
Why Marketing?

- Competition means dollars & programs
  - Public
  - Private
  - Charter
  - Homeschooling
  - Online
  - Public School Transfers

- All compete for a limited number of students and funding
Why Marketing?

- Your competition is marketing.
- You need to define who you are — don’t leave that to someone else.
Why Marketing?

- Fort Wayne Community Schools
  - Experienced vouchers, charter school competition
  - Established an enrollment campaign that paralleled its competition
Why Marketing?

○ Principals in target areas went door-to-door
  – Books for each child
  – Stickers with logo & web site address
  – Registration on site/at homes

○ Grassroots supplemented by
  – Direct mail
  – Radio ads
  – Yard signs
  – T-shirts
You can find the commercial that we did here:

http://youtube/Hb2x4D-abpo.
Are marketing dollars well-spent if:

- You prevent 100 students from leaving?
- You gain 100 students?
- You are able to maintain enrollment?
- You create a positive perception and pride in your district?
Can You Afford Not To?

- Fort Wayne spent $86,507 on marketing this school year and grew by 333 students.

- That means approximately $2 million more in state funding.
Is your district experiencing changing demographics?
Why Marketing?

- Changing demographics
  - Family structure
  - Diversity
  - Language barriers
  - Adult/child ratio
  - Fewer in community are parents
  - Fewer children – shrinking enrollments
  - Graying community
  - Income levels affect need and choice
- Schools’ roles in community changing
Are you seeing a changing perception of schools and education?
Why Marketing?

- Public perception of education
  - Media coverage
  - General statements from lawmakers
  - School reform messages
  - Negatives get more attention than positives
  - Push back, voting down referenda

- Balance that perception with reality
Silver car sought in theft of school bus batteries in Hendricks County

Survey: Hoosiers say schools are failing

Four decades of failed school reform

Kentucky high schools urged to end postgame handshakes

Bullying victim wins $50,000 from Pendleton schools

Carmel teacher, assistant removed from classroom after discipline incident at middle school

Former Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired teacher accused of sex with student

'Hero' teacher, student gunman dead in Nevada middle school shooting

Authorities investigate suspicious substance on Indianapolis Public Schools bus

Lawrence Central High School freshman dies after suicide attempt
Are your school funding resources stretched to the breaking point?
Why Marketing?

School funding

• Economy, jobs make everyone more “money aware”
• Changing funding formulas touch districts differently
• Referenda create winners, losers
• Tax caps limit funds for facilities, debt, transportation
• Unfunded state mandates for public schools
  - Teacher evaluation
Why Marketing?

- Uninformed community
- Need for other revenue sources
Muncie voters to decide school bus service future

Schools fail equality test

Clark-Pleasant Schools looking for $3M in advertising

Odds are against districts in referendums

Avon Schools cut jobs, budget

Referendum rejection to challenge Mt. Vernon, Southern Hancock school officials

Schools turn to sponsors to help pay bills

Carmel-Clay, Speedway approve school referendums

Tax caps leave once-wealthy schools struggling

Zionsville considers options after school referendum fails

Superintendent says saving teachers and counselors is a priority

School referendums showed voters clutch wallets tightly

This time around, fewer referendums for schools pass muster with voters

Voters facing big decision with school referendums: more taxes or more cuts
School marketing: doing things that show your “customers” - students, parents, staff members and the community - that your schools are dedicated to serving the community’s education needs to the highest degree possible.

It’s about meeting the needs and wants of internal and external audiences and receiving value in return.
What Marketing Is

Return Value:

• Increased enrollment
• Quality teachers
• Contented employees
• Greater parent participation
• More volunteers
• Improved community support, pride
• Helpful relationships with outside organizations
• Community economic development
What Marketing Isn’t

- Not hype or spin – must be reality-based
- Not just in response to a crisis – not credible if only used when a need arises
- Not just sales – sales is short-term, and just one tactic of a marketing process
What Marketing Is

- It’s knowing and understanding your “customers” so completely that your product or service fits their needs and wants perfectly.

- It’s part of a strategic plan with all district personnel aware of your product and message and delivering it in their daily actions – administrators, teachers and support staff!
The Marketing Process

➢ Need a core marketing team
  • May start small (3-4 individuals)
  • Believers in the effort
  • Long-term commitment
  • Develop, coordinate, implement, track efforts
  • Good communication skills
  • Creativity a plus
  • Ability to work as team, independently
  • Open to others’ points of view
The Marketing Process

- Assess the school/district’s present position
- Determine your goals
- Develop the plan
- Implement the plan
- Monitor progress/evaluate/adjust
The Marketing Plan

- Can be an overall strategic plan and support a school or district mission.
- Can be more specific to a particular initiative or program.
- Either way — steps are the same, but the depth, number of goals and strategies and timeline vary.
Assessing Present Position
What you already know

➢ Conduct a SWOT assessment
  • Strengths
  • Weaknesses
  • Opportunities
  • Threats
Assessing Present Position
What you don’t or might not know

➢ Research can include both formal & informal activities

➢ Some examples:
  • Focus groups
  • Listening tours
  • Anecdotal info from meetings, phone calls, emails, comments in media coverage, etc.
  • Election results
Assessing Present Position
What you don’t or might not know

- Some examples (cont.):
  - Student, school performance results
  - Communications audit
  - Survey results
  - Census results
Assessing Present Position
What you don’t or might not know

- Much data already exists
- Many data gathering tools are available
  - Online surveys
  - Social media
- Sometimes you need an expert
  - Sponsorships
  - Expertise of your constituents
Who Is Your Competition?

- Assess your competitors (SWOT)
- Assess apathy within organization or community
- Determine the positives that set you apart
- Know your biggest challenges to understand how to address them
Position statement (1-2 sentence) supports mission

- Core message to send to constituents
- Definition of who you are, what you offer, to whom and why you are different.
- Example

_____ is a recognized school proud of its success in creating an environment in which every student benefits from high standards, innovative programs, a dedicated teaching staff, and a safe environment. We are dedicated to preserving the strong community support we enjoy by continuing to meet the education needs of our

- from How to Market Your School by Johanna Lockhart
Develop the Plan

Position Statement

- **Example Goal** – (What you hope to accomplish)
  - Maintain programs and funding by increasing the percentage of students who reside in and attend local public schools.

- **Example Objective** – (time & level of change - make it measurable)
  - The number of students who live in the district and attend the public schools will increase by 500 students by the date of state counts in September.
Position Statement

- Goal (can be multiple)
- Objective (can be multiple) - measurable
  - Strategy (multiple) - approach
  » Tactic (multiple)
    - Activities
    - Budget
    - Timeline
    - Responsibility
Develop the Plan

- Know key **Publics & best Tools** to reach each
  - Parents
  - Non-parents
  - Students
  - Community & business leaders
  - Opinion leaders
  - School employees
  - Media

- Which ones important in reaching your goal?
- Do they require different messages?
Develop the Plan

- Each strategy, tactic should reflect a "Brand."
  - Consistent message/theme that sets you apart
  - Simple, short yet captures the overall
  - Consistent look graphically that supports the message
  - It carries a tone, manner, feel, personality
  - At the same time must be real — credible.
Video from Guilford Co. Schools
Implement the Plan

- May be short-term tied to an event
  - Promote parent conference participation
  - Spring enrollment in kindergarten

- Can be long-term spread over several years
  - Development, funding, participation in mentoring program
  - Program/facility design and resulting referendum campaign
Monitor Progress/Evaluate/Adjust

- Evaluate based on your “measurable goals” but also informal means
  - As you go
    - Faulty strategy?
    - Feedback/push back
  - At its conclusion
    - What worked/what didn’t
    - Try again with adjustments
    - Take a new approach/direction
Marketing
Tools
In Your Community

- Movie theater ads
- Student assistance events
- Direct mail
- Billboards
- Alumni events
- Public access television
- Community Foundations
- County Leadership Programs
In Person

- Face to face on boards
- Civic group presentations
- Chamber of Commerce presentations
- Faith-based leader groups
- Key communicator groups
- Parent organizations
- Senior Centers/Assisted Living
In Cyberspace

- Social media – yours and others in your area
- Websites – yours and others in your area
- E-newsletters – yours and others in your area
- Create/Utilize an app
- Links in email signatures
In Partnership

- Youth Leagues
- Local Parks
- Local Libraries
- YMCA
- Boys And Girls Club
- Before & After School programs
- Local Government
- Corporate Partnerships
In Your Schools

- Slideshows before music programs
- Yard signs at drop off zones
- School lobby displays
- Sidewalk chalk outside each school
- Links in email signatures
- Information on business cards
In Print

- Doctors offices
- Banks
- Realtor packet information
- Chamber packet information
- Restaurant placemats
- Postcards
In the Media

- Local newspaper
- Regional newspaper
- Local television
- Local radio
- Media websites
- Coffee News/other free papers
Media

and

School Marketing
Why is there so much bad news?
“Is the media negative? Media studies show that bad news far outweighs good news by as much as seventeen negative news reports for every one good news report. Why? The answer may lie in the work of evolutionary psychologists and neuroscientists. Humans seek out news of dramatic, negative events. These experts say that our brains evolved in a hunter-gatherer environment where anything novel or dramatic had to be attended to immediately for survival. So while we no longer defend ourselves against saber-toothed tigers, our brains have not caught up.”

Ray Williams
“Why we love bad news”
Psychology Today
December 30, 2010
Fight breaks out at high school game
INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) - A high school football game was called Friday ... Friday night's game was between Arsenal Tech High School and Fort ...
WISHTV | Oct 23, 2013

Two stabbed near Beech Grove High School
In a release, Beech Grove City Schools said administration was notified just after 3 p.m. that two male high school students walking together got ...
WISHTV | Sep 28, 2013

Heroin found in elementary school
Sep 27, 2013 ... One mother, who asked not to be identified, said she called the school for answers after noticing a strong police presence and search dogs.
WISHTV | Sep 28, 2013

Text Alerts
Sign up for text alerts from WISH-TV including school closings, severe weather alerts, and breaking news alerts.
WISHTV | Oct 23, 2013

Lockdown lifted at Knightstown schools
Officials with the Charles A Beard School Corporation say all schools in the area were on lockdown Friday morning because law enforcement ...
WISHTV | Sep 27, 2013

High School Sports - The Zone
Identify Groups That Should Hear the News Before the Media Does

- Staff (all-staff email)
- Parents (phone call, email, text, or letter home)
Communicating During a Crisis

- Explain what happened. In this case:
  - What was found
  - How it was found
  - Law enforcement contacted
  - What’s known about investigation at this point

- Assure parents of children’s safety
Communicating During a Crisis

- Assure parents school is involved in drug abuse prevention
- Ask parents to encourage their children to tell adult if they ever see or hear of anything suspicious at school
- Thank parents or staff for the work they do to keep school environment safe
Dear Parent/Guardian:

This morning, one of our students notified us that a baggie containing a green, leafy substance had been seen in one of our restrooms. We immediately investigated but did not find the baggie the student described.

Our investigation into this matter continues, and I am asking for your help. Please call me at 988-XXXX if your child has provided you any information that may help us determine who may have been responsible for bringing this substance to school.

I ask you to emphasize to your child that he or she should always notify an adult at school when incidents such as this one take place. I appreciate the continued efforts of our students, staff, and families to keep our school a safe and secure place to learn.

Sincerely,

Principal
Communicating During a Crisis
Managing the Media Inquiry

- Return reporters’ phone calls in a timely manner
- Designate a person on staff to handle media inquiries and do on-camera interviews
- Answer questions honestly
Communicating During a Crisis
Managing the Media Inquiry

- Stay on topic -- utilize same messages contained in parent letter
- Emphasize how school reacted and kept students safe
- If “ambushed,” remain calm, don’t cover face, refer reporter to person designated to handle media inquiries
Sharing Your School’s Good News
Officer Rod Bradway Killed (WISH-TV)

Thousands pay final respects to fallen IMPD Officer Rod Bradway (WTHR-TV)

Rod Bradway, Indianapolis police officer, fatally shot while trying to help woman (CBS News)

Indianapolis officer fatally shot, gunman killed (AP)
It's Thursday, September 26, 2013. This is a somber day in the Indianapolis area, as slain IMPD Officer Rod Bradway is laid to rest. "I wanted to share this photo from Stout Field Elementary this morning," said Mary Lang, chief communications officer for Wayne Township schools. "The staff at the school put this memorial together for Officer Bradway using some donated materials. Stout Field, in the MSD of Wayne Township, is along the route that Officer Bradway's procession will follow today." Thanks for sharing this, Mary! Wayne Township canceled classes today due to expected traffic congestion from the procession, which travels as far west as High School Road.

Our skies will be considerably more cheerful, says Paul Poteet. While some areas may have seen patches of fog this morning, lots of sunshine will help push temps to an expected high of 80!

Here are more of today's top stories ...

Provided by Mary Lang
Customer Service
We all have experienced bad customer service at some time...
“At many schools, the atmosphere parents encounter feels more like the Department of Motor Vehicles than Nordstrom’s.”

—Nora Carr in American School Board Journal article
Who are your customers?

- How similar & different?

- PARENTS
- STUDENTS
- BUSINESSES
- COMMUNITY
- EMPLOYEES
Similar needs

- Courtesy
- Timeliness
- Importance
- Honesty
- Empathy
Differing needs

- Cultural
- Generational
- Socio-economic
- Individual
- Communication preferences/needs
Who is delivering your customer service?

- Teachers, administrators
- Office support staff
- Bus drivers
- Custodians
- Nurses
- Food service staff
- Students
- Parents, volunteers
Today’s challenges

- Communication expectations – from fast to even faster
- Edgier public, quicker to escalate
- Attitude that anger gets results
- Fast-moving support or criticism through social media
- Balance of security with welcoming presence
Steps for meeting these challenges

- Develop an inclusive task force.
- Identify your customers and their needs.
- Determine your trigger points or situations.
- Create standards and training.
- Evaluate/reward.
Task force

- Include representatives
  - Who provide the services – front-line employees, administrators, teachers, other staff, etc.
  - Who receive the services – students, parents, community/business members, etc.
Research to find needs

- Anecdotal evidence
- Surveys – paper/online
- Audits
- Focus groups
- Secret shoppers
- Customer satisfaction cards
Developing the standards

- Compare
  - What you want the school or district image to be with
  - What you learned in your research
- Gaps lead standard development, training
Trigger points

What are the situations that result in customer service challenges for your district?
Most likely trigger situations?

Possibilities:
- Promptness returning phone calls or email
- Email & phone etiquette
- Visitor welcome, friendliness in your schools
- Consistency in protocols in your schools
- Helpful, appropriate signage
- Information and tours available for potential move-ins
- Appreciation activities for staff, volunteers
- Dealing with an angry parent
- Easy-to-navigate processes for staff, families
Successful Results

- Determine practices, processes or policies that need to be more user-friendly and make changes.
- Develop standards to close the customer service gaps.
- Ask a group of people (both customer service providers and receivers) to review the draft for input and suggested revisions.
Delivery of Training

Resources –
- Use outside trainers - perhaps from business
- In-house using own program
- In-house using “packaged presentation”
  - NSPRA’s Unlocking Sensational Service
- In-house webinar, video, etc.
- Consultant - INSPRA members?
Differentiate Training

- Some elements will remain the same for all
- Others vary according to audience/roles/personalities
- Use members of each group to help develop their specific training
- Make it fun for everyone with examples, sharing stories in small groups, role playing or skits
Standards take-away

- Provide opportunities for suggestions and make revisions based on attendees’ input.
- Deliver a revised version to each attendee after training for easy reference.
- Make copy available on employee-only location on intranet or web site.
- Incorporate in employee handbook.
Example

Extraordinary Service

Front Line Etiquette

- Smile.
- Be Friendly.
- Stop what you are doing and greet all who enter. (Use a standard greeting when answering the buzzer/doorbell.)
- Be a good listener (personalize).
- Model professionalism at all times.
- Use please and thank you.
- Be helpful, empathetic, sympathetic.
- Be respectful to all.
**Phone Etiquette**

- State school/dept. and name. Suggested greeting example: “Brook School Elementary this is Linda, how may I help you.”
- Use standard automated message across district including consistent number prompt to reach a person. (We may have to coordinate this.)
- Answer phone promptly (attempt by 3 rings) – it is better to acknowledge by putting on hold politely than letting the phone ring and be sure to thank them for holding. Keep checking back with them frequently until you can take the call.
- Inform caller of your department.
- Smile with your voice.
- Be alert, pay attention, listen.
- When dealing with an angry caller, listen, do not interrupt, remain calm, offer assistance and/or the appropriate person.
- When you get a caller you cannot understand, politely ask him/her to repeat the request or question and to speak slowly. OR repeat information back to caller to confirm understanding.
- If you promise a call back by a certain time or day, do so even if you have to report that you don’t yet have an answer—but let him/her know when you do expect it.
**Email Etiquette**

- Acknowledge receipt of email even when you can’t provide immediate information.
- Create a signature listing name and school.
- Use professional, polite tone, knowing what you’ve written may be shared.
- Use a phone call instead of an email when message is detailed, complex or personal.
- Be brief and concise with important information first.
- Avoid using all caps.
- Avoid responding to all, unless appropriate.
- Use proper grammar and spelling in all emails (not texting abbreviations). Use spell check/grammar setting in Outlook.
- Always reread for tone and clarity before you send.
- Use care when discussing confidential information. Avoid using full student names. Email is subject to public records disclosure.
Evaluate effectiveness

- Set up a “secret shopper” process that takes an unfamiliar person into a school to test whether standards are being followed. Checklist identifies specific areas for review.
  - Ex. - Visitor asking for enrollment, school and program information
  - Simple phone calls to buildings or departments to check protocol
  - Tests areas with most concerns.

- Use follow-up surveys, focus groups after training.
Reward

- Recognition
  - Year end (Honor & Excellence)
  - Employee of the Month
  - Special parking
  - In print—employee news
  - Thank-you notes
Dealing with difficult people

Jesse Ventura has been seen in a T-shirt that reads:

Admit nothing.
Deny everything.
Counterattack.

May work for a wrestler but not recommended for a school.
National School Public Relations Association
Indiana Chapter

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