



Re-Recruiting Current Families at your School – Best Practices

Presented by
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Our Goal

- ▶ During this session, we will discuss best practices in re-recruitment strategies to keep current families enrolled at your school. We will also examine best practices in re-enrollment and internal marketing.

Introduction

- »» Rollercoasters
- Coaching
- Blog









Enrollment Catalyst partners with schools to provide coaching for school leaders in their school's enrollment management and marketing systems, strategies, and solutions needed to reach their goals.

www.EnrollmentCatalyst.com/blog

The screenshot shows the top portion of the Enrollment Catalyst website. At the top right is a search bar with the word "SEARCH" and a magnifying glass icon. Below this is the "ENROLLMENT catalyst" logo. To the right of the logo are links for "REQUEST INFORMATION" and "facebook". A navigation menu includes "Home", "About", "Catalyst Program", "Resources", "Services", "Speaking", and "Contact". A green button labeled "RICK'S BLOG!" is positioned to the right of the navigation menu. On the left side, there is a "Recent Posts" section with five entries, each preceded by a right-pointing arrow. Below this is a "Subscribe to Rick's Blog" section with input fields for "Name" (split into "First" and "Last") and "Email *". The main content area features a large banner for "RICK NEWBERRY'S Blog" with a photo of Rick Newberry. Below the banner is a breadcrumb trail: "BLOG > ENROLLMENT & MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOLS". The main article title is "Enrollment & Marketing Strategies for Schools". Below the title are page numbers "1 2 3 4 5 Next >>". The article title is "Six Ways to Market Your School Through Your Parents" with a date of "4/12/11" and tags "Marketing, Word of Mouth Marketing". The article text begins with "Whenever I conduct focus groups or a survey at a school to help develop a marketing plan, I always ask the parents how they first heard about the school. Their answer is consistently through the referral of someone else—typically your current parents."

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BLOG > ENROLLMENT & MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOLS

Enrollment & Marketing Strategies for Schools

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Six Ways to Market Your School Through Your Parents

4/12/11 | Marketing, Word of Mouth Marketing

Whenever I conduct focus groups or a survey at a school to help develop a marketing plan, I always ask the parents how they first heard about the school. Their answer is consistently through the referral of someone else—typically your current parents.

Re-Recruitment

- »» The strategy of recruiting current families back to your school for another year.

Re-Recruitment

- ▶ Re-Recruitment is the strategy and process for recruiting your current families to continue enrollment in your school for the next year.

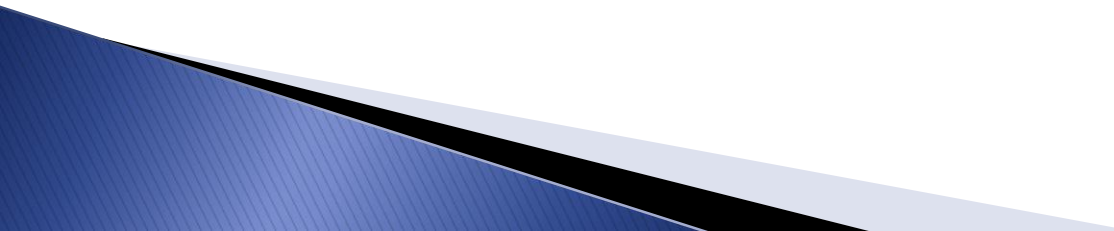
False Assumption

- ▶ We can no longer assume that just because a family is enrolled this year they will be back for another year.

More Cost-Effective

- ▶ It is more cost-effective to retain a family than it is to recruit a replacement.
- ▶ Typically, retention is the greatest issue between the transition years (Preschool to Kindergarten; 5th to 6th grade; 8th to 9th grade).

The Value of Your Families

- ▶ Have you ever considered the value of the students enrolled at your school?
 - Opportunity to fulfill your mission
 - Opportunity to make a life-changing impact on the life of a student
 - Opportunity to gain revenue not only for this year but for the entire span of your school
- 

What does a current family with one child at your school represent?

- ▶ Let's say a parent with a Kindergarten student is enrolled in your school; what does this family represent?
 - A potential student for your class next year
 - A future student for every grade level through your highest grade
 - A potential parent to tell other parents about your school
 - More opportunity to accomplish your mission
 - An opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child during their key formative years
 - Tuition revenue for the next 12 years

Tuition Revenue

- ▶ If tuition is \$7,000 at your school then this child will result in \$151,044 in tuition revenue (assuming annual 5% increases) from 1st grade through 12th grade.
- ▶ What's the financial impact if the student leaves:
 - after Kindergarten = \$144,044 is lost to your school.
 - after 5th grade = \$94,051 is lost to your school.

Retention in Higher Education

- ▶ Vincent Tinto wrote a book called: Leaving College in 1987 and revised it in 1994.
- ▶ The key to effective retention, Tinto demonstrates, is in a strong commitment to quality education and the building of a strong sense of inclusive educational and social community on campus.

Retention in Schools

- ▶ The same principles apply for schools in regards to retention:
 - Parents will most likely continue investing in your school when they are satisfied with the overall educational experience.
 - Parents will most likely continue enrolling in your school when their family is connected to the community (friends, groups, activities, etc.).

Do you know why families leave your school?

Why families leave your school:

- ▶ Financial reasons
- ▶ Rising cost of tuition
- ▶ Relocate to another area
- ▶ Desire a “free” education at a public school
- ▶ Disciplinary issues
- ▶ Lack of programs
- ▶ Perceived prestige of other schools
- ▶ Conflict with school philosophy or specific issue

Why families leave your school (cont'd):

- ▶ Other school has more “extras”
- ▶ Desire for more programs in athletics or arts
- ▶ Need a specialized program
- ▶ General dissatisfaction
- ▶ Lack of leadership and vision for the future

Do you know why families stay at your school?

Why families stay at your school:

- ▶ Overall satisfaction with the school experience
- ▶ Student and parent connections with faculty, coaches, staff and peers
- ▶ Environment and community of the school
- ▶ Commitment to and belief in your educational mission
- ▶ Ability and willingness to pay tuition
- ▶ They believe in the difference your school makes
- ▶ Desire for the best education

Why families stay at your school:

- ▶ The school's perceived value matches the actual educational experience and there is a willingness and commitment to *stay and pay*.

Best Practices in Re-Recruitment

- »» Strategies to retain current families at your school for another year.

Re-Recruitment Best Practices

- ▶ Retention statistics and reports
- ▶ Responsibility of re-recruitment
- ▶ Vision and leadership
- ▶ Connections to community
- ▶ Customer service
- ▶ Identify at-risk students and families
- ▶ The re-enrollment process
- ▶ Focus on the transition grades
- ▶ Parent communication
- ▶ Internal marketing
- ▶ Parent feedback

Statistics, Reports and Grading



Retention Statistics

- ▶ It is important to track your school's retention rate.
 - Retention Rate = (# of students re-enrolled in new year) / (Total number of students minus graduating class enrolled in previous year – those eligible to re-enroll)
 - By Division
 - By Transition Grade
 - By Grade Level

Retention Reports

- ▶ Once re-enrollment begins, a weekly enrollment dashboard report should be produced showing the number of students that have completed the process by grade level:
 - Number eligible to re-enroll
 - In-process
 - Contracts received
 - Deposits received
 - Cancelled

FMS

- ▶ You should grade all of your students eligible to re-enroll using the following grades:
 - F – Firm = very likely to return
 - M – Moderate = on the fence
 - S – Shaky = unlikely to return
 - Z – Cancel = will not return

Responsibility of Re-Recruitment

- »» Every faculty and staff member is responsible for re-recruiting families back for another year.

Responsibility

- ▶ Who is responsible for the re-recruitment strategy at your school?

The Retention “Champion”

- ▶ While retention is the responsibility of everyone at your school, it must be “championed” by someone.
 - This retention “champion” should lead the strategy and should report directly to the head of school on the initiatives and results.
 - The director of admissions/enrollment is typically the best person to “champion” the retention effort.
- ▶ In addition, a retention team should be formed to focus on retention issues at your school.

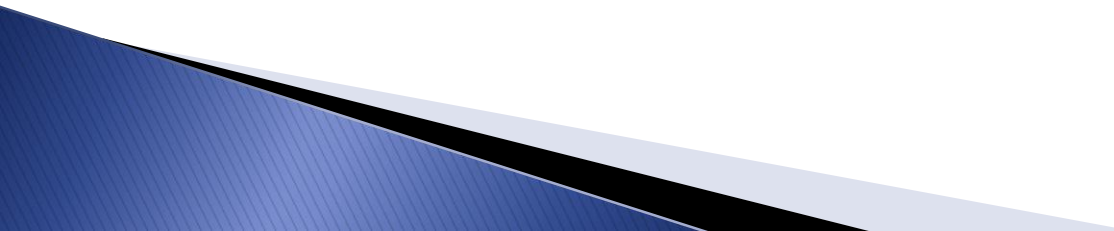
Responsibilities

- ▶ Develop and implement the re-recruitment strategy and process
- ▶ Present issues to the school leadership that impact retention
- ▶ Report on the retention of students and families on a weekly basis to the leadership team
- ▶ Develop intervention and follow-up with families and students “on the fence”
- ▶ Lead the re-enrollment effort

Everyone's Responsibility

- ▶ Retention is the responsibility of every faculty and staff member at your school:
 - Performance
 - Relationships
 - Quality
 - Communication
 - Service

Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ Quality/excellence in their job
 - ▶ Tell your school's story
 - ▶ Turn negative moments into positive moments
 - ▶ Channel concerns to the administration
 - ▶ Communication with parents
 - ▶ Relationships with parents
 - ▶ Create memorable moments
 - ▶ Positive ambassadors for the school
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Role of Faculty and Staff

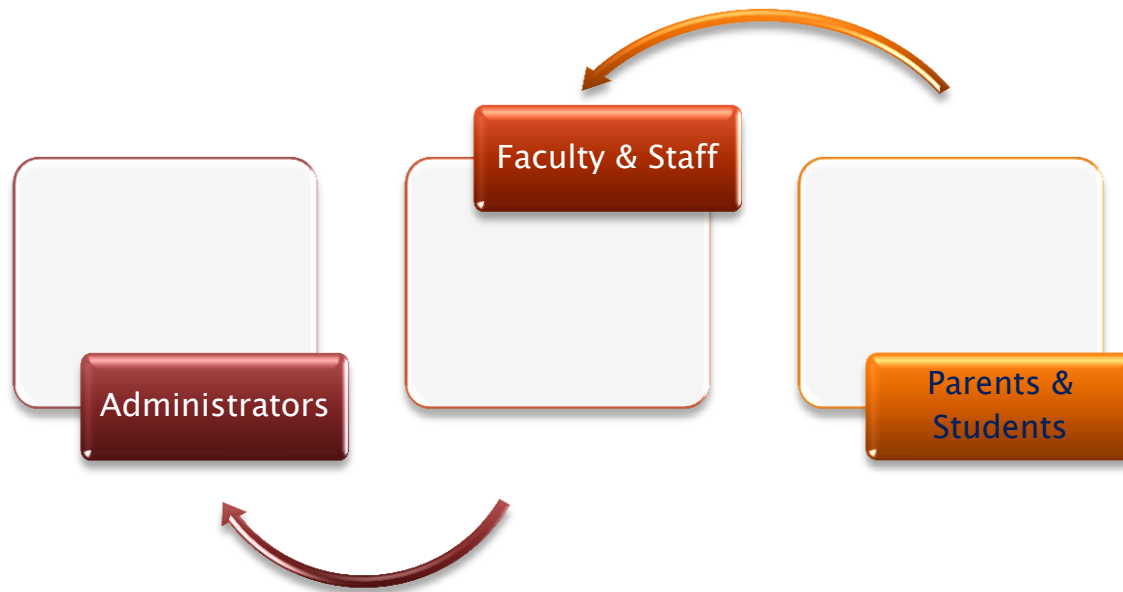
- ▶ #1 – Your first and primary role at your school is to serve the school with excellence in your area of responsibility.
 - You are the school's brand.
 - What you do best is when you close the classroom door.
 - Everyone is equally important in this effort.

**“The brand on the outside is only
as strong as the brand on the inside.”**

– Karl Speak, President, Beyond Marketing Thought

Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ #2 – You have the opportunity and responsibility to turn negative conversations and gossip into positive brand moments.



Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ #3 – You should be a story-teller for your school.
 - Stories about faculty, students and alumni should be a regular part of your conversation. We need to communicate stories that will lift up the image of the school.

Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ #4 – Celebrate your students, parents and colleagues.
 - As a community, we have the opportunity to celebrate the successes of our students, parents and colleagues.
 - Acknowledge student successes—Send at least five positive emails every week to parents in your class.

Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ #5 – Welcome visitors on campus
 - When a prospective parent visits your classroom, stop what you are doing and introduce yourself and your class to them.
 - When you see a prospective parent on a tour, take a moment to welcome them to your school.

Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ #6 – Focus on what you can do to retain students and families at your school.
 - Excellence in what you do.
 - Positive communication.
 - Timely response to parent concerns.
 - Encouragement to remain part of the community.
 - Channel concerns to the administration.
 - Sell and promote the next level of the school.
 - Make it your focus to retain the students and families in your class.

Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ #7 – Provide outstanding customer service to the parents that you serve.
 - Roll out the red carpet for your families
 - Create a “WOW” experience for your families

Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ #8 – Make every effort to make this one school where everyone works together toward the same goal.
 - When the preschool wins, the entire school wins
 - When the upper school wins, the preschool wins

Role of Faculty and Staff

- ▶ #9 – Take the time to make personal connections with parents and students.
 - A handwritten note
 - A positive email about their child
 - A birthday card of the special day
 - Something memorable that will be talked about at home

Vision and Leadership

- » Enrollment will rise or fall based on the leadership at your school.

A School Example

- ▶ Two weeks ago I spent two days on the campus of a school. Here are some of their facts:
 - School and Church were known as “the” School and Church in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s.
 - A little over a decade ago the Church and School went through leadership changes which has resulted in instability, a Church split and declining enrollment and membership.
 - The school’s enrollment was at a high of 1,000 students. This past year the enrollment hit its low of 385 students.

Leadership, Improvement & Vision

- ▶ The drive toward school improvement—increasing the quality of the educational experience—will be critical to your ability to increase retention.
- ▶ The confidence of the parents in the leadership of the school will have a significant impact on retention.

Inspire a Shared Vision

- ▶ Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.
 - What is your vision? What is your picture of the future?
 - “Leaders have a desire to make something happen, to change the way things are, to create something that no one else has ever created before.”
(Kouzes and Posner, The Leadership Challenge)
- ▶ Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
 - Is your vision shared?

Implementation of Vision

- ▶ The implementation of your vision will be critical for creating enthusiastic support for your school. It will also empower word-of-mouth marketing.
- ▶ It's been said that:
 - “Vision without implementation is hallucination.”

Community Connections

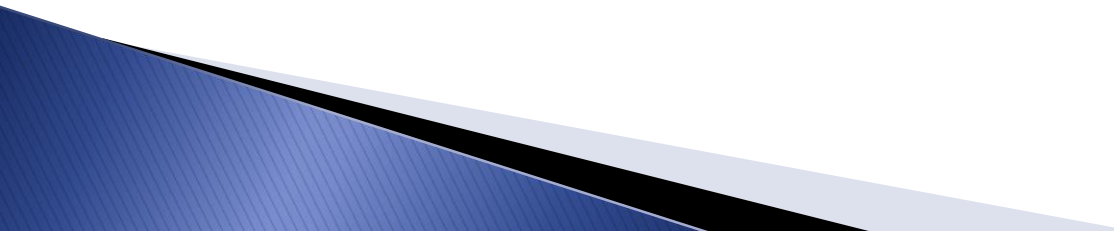
- »» The more that parents and students are connected to your school community, the more difficult it is to leave.

Connections

- ▶ Families are more likely to remain enrolled when they are connected to groups within your school community.

**What can you do to intentionally foster
community connections at your school?**

Community Connections

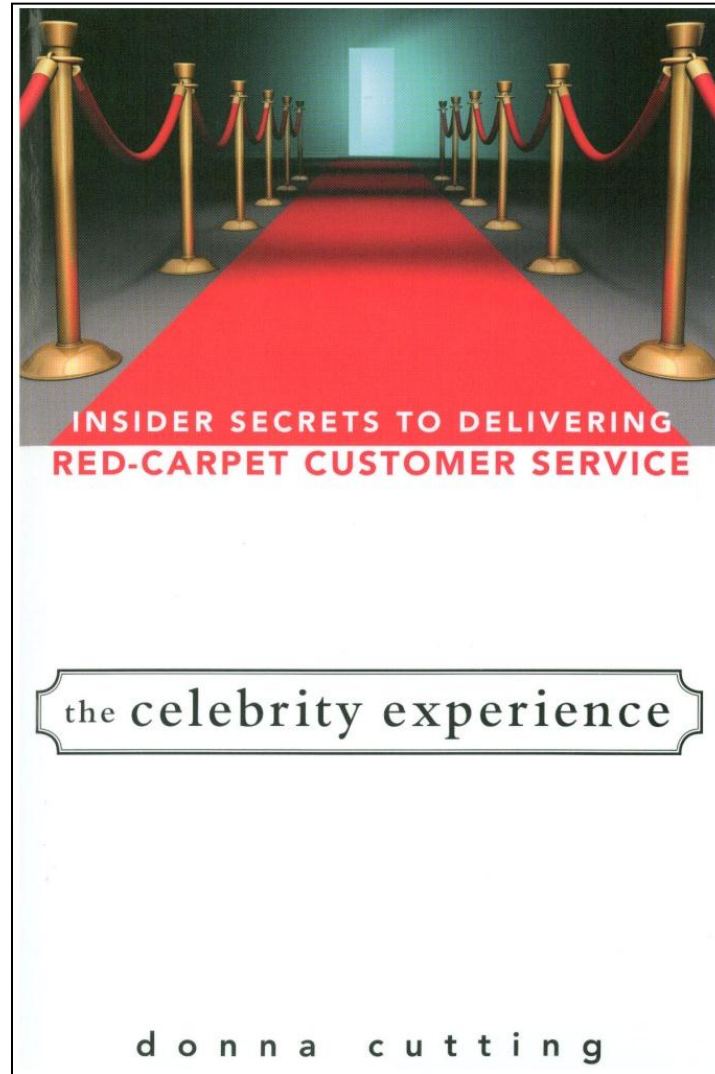
- ▶ School-wide events
 - ▶ Parent Ambassadors
 - ▶ Mentoring programs
 - Student to Student
 - Parent to Parent
 - ▶ Buddies
 - ▶ School spirit
 - ▶ Head of School/Principal coffees, chats, etc.
 - ▶ Home dessert vision casting
- 

Develop an annual plan to intentionally create community connections at your school for students and parents.

Customer Service



Must Read on Customer Service



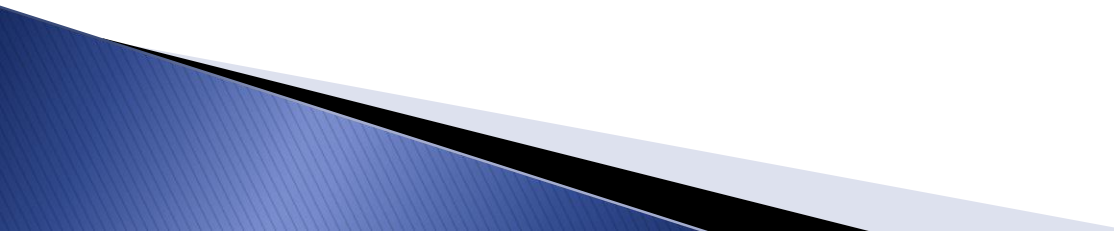
High Point University

- ▶ Donna Cutting uses High Point University in *The Celebrity Experience* as a premier example of customer service. What do they do?
 - Director of WOW!
 - Wowing campus visitors
 - Delivering birthday cards
 - The President and his gumball machine
 - Valentine's Day
 - Free valet parking
 - Construction dust and car washes

Memorable Moments

- ▶ When you serve your parents or students in an exceptional way or do something that is memorable, this creates a moment that will be shared by word of mouth.

Customer Service Expectations

- How do you define the service that you will provide families?
 - What are your expectations for your employees?
 - How can you roll out the red carpet for your parents?
 - As a service provider, it is important to develop a customer service creed for your school.
 - Hold all employees accountable to upholding your customer service expectations.
 - Provide customer service training for your school team.
- 

Commitment to Service

- ▶ It is important to have a customer service approach when working with your families.
 - Take the time to listen
 - Respond in a timely manner
 - Always demonstrate care and concern to your parents
- ▶ It also means that we treat our families like celebrities!

Standing Out in a Crowded Market

- ▶ Exceptional customer service can help your school stand out in a crowded marketplace!

Identify At-Risk Families

- »» By identifying at-risk families, you can plan interventions to keep them enrolled.

Identify At-Risk Students / Families

- ▶ An at-risk identification system should be put in place in which at-risk students are identified and interventions are planned, implemented and evaluated.
- ▶ R.E.A.P. – Retention Early Alert Profile
 - Establish a system so that faculty, staff and coaches can communicate at-risk students to the director of enrollment.

Plan Interventions

- ▶ Indicators of at-risk students and families:
 - Students and families not plugged into the community
 - Late tuition payments
 - Disgruntled families
 - Academic and disciplinary issues
- ▶ Plan interventions to work with at-risk students and families.
 - Personal meeting and team approach
 - Progress steps toward better integration

Re-Enrollment



Online Re-Enrollment

- ▶ Parents should expect to re-enroll online especially for all RenWeb schools.

Re-Enrollment Timeline

- ▶ January and February –
 - Launch online re-enrollment
 - Launch internal marketing campaign
- ▶ March
 - Increase re-enrollment fee
 - Contact all families that did not re-enroll and set up a personal meeting with them.

The Re-Enrollment Campaign

- ▶ Create an internal campaign that coincides with your re-enrollment process:
 - Re-state your brand distinctiveness
 - Remind parents of what has been accomplished
 - Look toward next year and present some exciting plans
 - Communicate by using banners, on-campus billboards and small group events
 - Hold an all-school “spirit” event after the holidays
 - Enlist grade level volunteers to call parents to encourage re-enrollment

The Re-Enrollment Packet

- ▶ What should be included in the re-enrollment packet?
 - Personal letter from the head of school that “sells” the family on another school year
 - Case for continued enrollment
 - Re-enrollment form with pre-printed parent and student information (unless online re-enrollment is available)
 - Tuition and fees information
 - Contract for re-enrollment
 - Include a refrigerator magnet that has a calendar for the next school year
 - Use a video message in an email from the head of school to communicate to all families

Financial Aid

- ▶ The use of financial aid also plays a significant role in the re-enrollment process of families.
- ▶ Use financial aid as a way to maximize enrollment and tuition revenue. In other words, use aid to fill empty seats in your classrooms.

Focus on the Transition Grades

- » Typically, students are most likely to leave during the transition grades.

Focus on the Transition Grades

- ▶ A school will typically lose the most students in the transition grades.
- ▶ Therefore, the retention strategy should focus on the transition grades (Pre-school to Kindergarten; 5th to 6th grade; 8th to 9th grade).

“One-Family-at-a-Time”

- ▶ Hold personal meetings with families in October/ November as part of your “one-family-at-a-time” approach.
 - Focus on their level of commitment to continue enrollment
 - Deal with specific issues and objections
 - Better forecast retention earlier on in the calendar year

Dessert Briefings

- ▶ Ask parents to hold a dessert “briefing” in their home to discuss the transition to the next level at the school.
 - All parents in a transition grade would be invited to attend an event in the home of a current parent (preferably a parent from the next level).
 - Head of school and appropriate leadership provides overview of the next level and allows for questions and concerns to be expressed.

“Next Year and Beyond” Meetings

- ▶ Hold informational meetings for parents at the school to gain an overview of the next grade level.

Step-Up Days

- ▶ Hold “Step-up” days in early Spring for students in transition grades. This will help students experience what it will be like at the next level.

Mentoring Program

- ▶ Create a mentoring program to connect a student in a transition grade with a student in the next level of your school. This could be accomplished individually or in small groups.

Specific Focus on 8th–9th Grade Retention

- ▶ Greatest area of concern in schools is the loss of students from 8th to 9th grade. What can we do?
 - Begin early at your school by selling the strengths and benefits of your upper school program.
 - Communicate stories of successful graduates.
 - Create a mentoring relationship with current high school parents and 8th grade parents.
 - Create similar mentoring relationships for students and involve 8th grade students in the high school.
 - Create a high school scholarship to attract 8th graders.

Parent Communication

»» Communicate, Communicate,
and Communicate!

Communicate to your Parents

- ▶ One of the most important components for your retention strategy is communication with your parents.
 - Communicate often and then communicate again.
 - Focus on communicating your brand distinctiveness.
 - Share stories about your graduates making a difference in college and in the world.
 - Share stories about your faculty and students.

Communication Strategies

- ▶ Make your school website your central source of communication.
 - Updated news
 - Alumni profiles
 - Faculty profiles
 - Head of school blog

Get the Talkers Talking

- ▶ “Get the talkers talking”
 - Identify the parents that are positive about your school.
 - Meet with them to give them things to talk about.

Email Newsletter

- ▶ Send an email newsletter every week.
 - Focus on student and faculty stories.
 - Emphasize and reinforce your brand distinctiveness.

Marketing Minutes

- ▶ Send an email to your faculty and staff every week to update them on the enrollment and marketing effort.

Internal Marketing

- »» The strategy of marketing your school to your parents.

Internal Marketing

- ▶ Internal marketing is the effort to continually reinforce your brand to your parents. Every message should reinforce your brand distinctiveness.
 - Internal self promotion
 - Celebrating and communicating your brand

Focus on internal marketing

- ▶ When your parents are very satisfied with their experience at your school, they will be your greatest asset to help you reach your community.
- ▶ You must do everything you can to market your school internally to your parents.

Tell Stories

- ▶ Communicate stories about your alumni, faculty and students and relate them to your brand.

Use the Web and Social Media

- ▶ Website
- ▶ Facebook
- ▶ Other social media channels

Signs and Banners

- ▶ Use signs, banners, mini-billboards, postcards and other visuals to communicate your brand.

Personal Connections

- ▶ Focus on developing personal relationships with parents through meetings, coffees, desserts, etc.

Customer Service and WOW

- ▶ Create memorable moments and deliver outstanding customer service to your parents which will increase the positive buzz on your campus.

Additional Strategies

- ▶ “Direct Line” from Head of School
- ▶ Parent Ambassadors
- ▶ “Be Proud” – school news
- ▶ Did you know?

Raving Fans

- ▶ You will create raving fans and inspiring brands when you:
 - Commit to developing and defining your brand
 - Communicate your brand message consistently in a visually compelling way
 - Concentrate on the role that everyone must play in branding and marketing your school
 - Celebrate the people and the positive, life-changing difference you are making at your school

Parent Feedback

- » Make sure you provide opportunities for your parents to provide feedback and to measure their satisfaction.

Parent Feedback

- ▶ Survey your parents annually by conducting an overall parent satisfaction and perception survey.
 - Look for areas of dissatisfaction to improve the quality of the school.
 - Report findings from the survey back to parents.
 - Best time to survey parents is October/November and February/March.

Exit Interviews

- ▶ Conduct exit interviews when parents choose not to re-enroll at the school.

Q&A

»» Questions and Answers

Consultation

- ▶ If you are interested in discussing your current challenges or marketing needs, please contact Rick Newberry to set up a time for an initial consultation:
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