



March 2009

Catholic School Enrollment Talk

ISPD is your Catholic School Enrollment Solution for maintaining and/or increasing the quantity, quality, or diversity of your elementary or secondary Catholic school enrollment.

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An Important Contact to have during this Time of the Recruitment Cycle

By John Cooper, ISPD Enrollment Specialist

Enrollment for next year is in full swing. Sooner or later you need to ask potential school families where they stand with enrolling in your school. Hopefully, this is not one of the first communications you have had with them. You and your school's enrollment core team need to determine when is the best time to have this important contact. For instance, if you are a high school that typically enrolls most its students by the end of March, then now is a good time to have this contact. However, if you are an elementary school that just started enrolling students in March, then you might want to wait until April to have this contact.

Here's How this Contact should be Organized and Implemented

Gather your volunteer phone callers (faculty, staff, parent volunteers, alumni) together. Give them a wonderful "cheat sheet" full of information that potential school families need to know such as cost, how to finance tuition, what is excellent about the school's academics, what makes the school Catholic, before and after school care, etc.

Give your phone callers a spreadsheet with name, address, phone number, and email address of any potential school family that you have surfaced up and until this point. Don't give them persons to contact who have either enrolled or told you that they were not planning to enroll.

Instruct your phone callers to take good notes of what they hear from your potential school families. It works better to have them email you all the notes so that you don't have to type from handwritten notes.

Have them call preferably in the evening hours. If you have a small list of contacts or you are really in a situation where you need to convert a higher number of potential school families into enrolled students, then I would encourage them to try back a couple of times before leaving a voice mail message.

Don't give your phone callers a rigid script to follow. However, give them a sample of how the phone call should go. Here's an example:

Ring of the Phone.

Hello, can I speak to Mrs. Johnson?

Mrs. Johnson, I am a faculty/administrator/parent at St. Example School. I am calling today to see if you are still considering enrollment at St. Example.

If they are still considering St. Example:

Do you know the registration process? Can I help you get registered?

Is there anything that we can do at this time to help you in making a decision? If they haven't visited the school, encourage them to do so and tell them you will have the person in charge of school visits give them a call.

If they are concerned about financing tuition, tell them St. Example wants to help and that you will have the person in charge of helping families finance tuition give them a call. If they have concerns about the school, note them, answering them if you can or tell them you will have so and so person at St. Example get back with them. **Don't give them a phone number and tell them to call so and so person.**

If they are no longer considering St. Example, then gently ask them:

What interested you in our school at one time? If that goes well, continue by asking:

What do you expect to receive from the school you have selected? If you have not decided on a school at this time, what sort of school are you still looking for? If that goes well, continue by asking:

It would help us, if you would be willing to tell us what school you have selected. Why?

It goes without saying - take good notes of each conversation and email notes to the appropriate person to record.

If you can't get a hold of the person and you go into their voice mail, leave a message that goes something like this:

This is John Cooper, a faculty member at St. Example calling for Mrs. Johnson. I am following up to see where you are at in deciding on a school for your child. Please let us know if you have any questions that we could answer to help you in making a decision. We would also like to know if you have chosen not to enroll at St. Example. Please contact Mrs. Watson, our director of admissions/principal/development director at (123) 456-7890.

Study Shows that Hispanic Response to Direct Mail is Increasing

There is a growing interest among Catholic schools about how to best market to Hispanic families. A Vertis Communication study showed that Hispanic response to direct mail had increased from 38% in 2003 to 54% in 2007.

During a recent focus group with Hispanic parishioners, I learned that their number one reason for not enrolling at the parish school was a lack of information about the school. The second reason cited was cost of tuition. In order to tackle perceived inability to afford Catholic school tuition, it would seem logical that we have to communicate more effectively. This Hispanic focus group indicated that communication would be improved if it were translated into Spanish.

Hispanics and the Internet

The marketing research firm eMarketer says that Hispanics are entering cyberspace at a higher percentage than any other ethnic group in the US and they predict that trend to continue. A study of the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies found that half of Hispanics using the Internet speak Spanish more than they speak English at home. With this in mind, schools looking to market to Hispanics on the web need to carve out a section of their school's web site to address the wants, needs, and desires of Hispanics in the Spanish language. In being more strategic, these schools might want to purchase web banner ads on Spanish-destination web sites in the school's market area.

Tool for Monitoring What's Said About Your School Online

Speaking of the Internet, have you ever wondered how you can monitor what is being said about your school online? You can go to the following web site <http://www.perspctv.com> to see if you have been mentioned in any of a variety of online mediums today, the last five days, or in the last thirty days. Enter in key words such as your school's name and geographic area and this tool will provide you with links to where your school has been mentioned on the web. Don't worry if you can't find your school. I couldn't find ISPD.

- [What's being said online about YOUR school?](#)

Spiritual Thought

If you are looking for an uplifting book to read this Lenten season, I would suggest checking out *The Cristo Rey Story - More than a Dream* by G.R. Kearney. This is the story of a group of Jesuits and those they brought along with them to create out of faith a Catholic school that would work for the economically disadvantaged. As St. Paul says, the Cross can be viewed as a "folly" to those without faith. These Jesuits and their collaborators embraced the cross of poverty. Through their courageous actions many of their students have been given new life. This book stands as a reminder to all of us during Lent that the crosses we face each and every day in supporting Catholic education are all about bringing new life to our students and the world. Amen!

ISPD Webinar Back by Popular Request: "Successful Catholic Development in Tough Economic Times"

With the success of our Webinar on February 23rd with over 500 people in attendance, we will once again offer this same topic on **Thursday, April 2, 2009, from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM CENTRAL STANDARD TIME**. This is a free Webinar, and all you have to do is visit our website at www.ISPD.com and register. Other Webinar offerings are also listed on the ISPD website. We invite you to join us.

- [Visit our Website to Register Today!](#)

Spring 2009 Workshops

ISPD Workshops Delve Into Depth

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Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think could benefit from this information. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please contact us.

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