



Ways to enhance your school's reach, visibility, and presence within your community

MEDIA

- Logo – communicates your brand. Keep branding consistent throughout all forms of marketing and media
- Website prepared with school “seekers” in mind. Today’s front door to the school.
 - Place key words in metatag and on first page.
 - Don’t “bury” the school site within the church site.
 - Test search your site.
 - Be sure it is easy to use and designed to optimize search engines.
 - Update frequently to get full attention of search engines. (Weekly is the ideal.)
 - Be sure there are a lot of photos, student art, and graphs on your website, rather than lots of words. (Educators tend to get wordy.)
 - Now and then, run a test search to see if your school shows up and on what page. (Goal is to be first on the first page of search results.)
 - Keep website up to date. (E.g. Don’t add a daily calendar unless it will be updated EVERY day.)
 - Be sure your site answers the most common questions. Answer before they ask.
 - Informs about on-campus school activities. (Get them onto the campus.)
 - Grade level descriptions.
 - Communicate (different from bragging!) academic success: testing, contests, of individuals and groups.
 - Easy, obvious, frequently (on every page) offered link for personal contact.
- There is a trend toward two websites: the address of one site is made public and is intended for people seeking a school. The other is accessible by password and is available only to those authorized such as staff and school parents. It can include grades, lunch menus, homework, links to curriculum sites, communication, links to newsletters, etc. The second site can be accessed through your public site.
- Lutheran? Does the word communicate/connect with your primary audience? Support or hinder ministry? Do not pretend **not** to be something you are!
- Printed materials that communicate your school’s quality.
 - Brochures that say, “Open me” and provide information parents really want. One for each level.
 - Enrollment forms that invite parents to enroll. Communicate quality.
 - Church & school newsletters (send to the newly enrolled) and bulletin.
 - Letterhead – Business Cards – Envelopes – keep branding consistent
- Ads on Social Media and in local magazines, newspapers, radio, TV, billboards, buses, airport kiosks, etc.
 - In sections read by mothers.
 - Local “free” papers are less expensive and often more effective than the city-wide papers.
 - Check to be certain your target audience is covered.
 - Work with PTL to promote school on social media sights and on *Yelp* or *Great Schools*. You may want to “pre-write” some promo pieces for them and calendar who will post or contribute when and where.
 - As applicable, combine resources with other Lutheran schools.

- Blogs – simple means to communicate on a regular basis. Post the principal’s weekly newsletter article, do you have any “mommy bloggers” in your network, ask people to report blog-style on events that have taken place, successful alums - high school, college, beyond. Have them tell their journey starting from your school, etc.
- Video – watch the cost, professional only
- Street Signs
 - Permanent roadside sign. Does it convey permanence & quality?
 - Temporary roadside signs and banners. Moving and replacing multiplies their effectiveness.
- Public Relations: news releases & media contacts. No charge!
- Announcements on Christian radio
- Place school ads where you notice school ads, where parents notice school ads. Ask “Which newspapers and magazines do you read?”
- Direct mail postcards to primary audience. Use a service. Get creative!

On-Site

- Personal tours/consultation:
 - If possible, schedule at day/time to best show off the class/school.
 - Let teacher know.
 - Have homeroom teacher/class prepared to briefly greet and invite back for a longer visit.
 - Class ambassadors – welcome and answer questions of new students and their parents.
 - Class greeters – welcome and help all visitors.
 - Talk for a couple minutes before the tour.
 - Anticipate needs/interests and include in tour. Know where you are going and why. Know what to show AND what NOT to show.
 - Ask questions between stops.
 - Learn special interests and include in the tour.
 - Know needs for personal consultation later.
 - Have something to drink ready to offer after the tour.
 - Consultation in comfortable, private area.
 - Be conscious of surroundings: is storage visible? What is displayed on the walls and bulletin board? How neat is your desk? Straighten up. You have company coming!
 - Have them seated to face something that reinforces your verbal message with or without pointing it out to them.
 - Answer questions first. Ask questions last. This is THEIR time. If they apply, you will have to time to ask some deeply personal questions. This may be time, but it may not be **the** time.
 - Provide detailed information about the school in a packet that is ready to go: Application form, brochure, recent news article, recent newsletter, recent news releases, information about upcoming school event they may like to attend, yearbook from the previous year, your business card, financial information (costs and tuition assistance), etc.
 - Follow-up the next day or even later that evening. Ask: Need more or different information? Like to spend some time in the classroom?
- Inquiries. Phone calls: only trained workers and volunteers should answer the phone. Should be ready to ask the right questions and to record the information. Follow-up on inquiries within 24 hours.
- While talking by phone with an inquirer who is at their computer, invite them to go to the school website for a tour.
- Train the school receptionist. Record every contact and follow-up.

- Train all staff. All must market the school.
- Follow-up phone calls/e-mails: after inquiries, after tours, to notify admission form received, to notify of acceptance, after first day, after first month, after first semester.
- Referral marketing indicates satisfied parents. Recruitment incentives. Be intentional. Expect referrals. Start before enrollment: “Most new students heard about us from one of our school families.”
- Open houses/Preview events - Purpose is to get people in the building and expose them to your wonderful school. Be ready to share information about the school. Don’t oversell. Be ready to “meet & greet”. Schedule a time for them to return for personal consultation and tour. Follow-up with personal contact the next day. Like to visit for a tour and personal consultation? Remind of visit scheduled at open house.
- Special events that get the target audience onto the grounds, into the building, and in contact with the staff and people currently served by the school. Plays, Concerts, Open House, Carnival, Athletics, Science Fair, etc. Be ready to share information about the school. Be ready to “meet & greet” and give brief tours. Schedule a time for them to return for a personal consultation and tour. Follow-up with personal contact the next day to ask: Would you like to visit for tour and personal consultation? Or to remind of visit scheduled at the event.
- PowerPoint photo loop!
 - Play videos and presentations in high traffic areas even when it seems no one is paying attention: in the narthex on Sunday, at the basketball game, during the rummage sale...
- Be mindful of the importance of the appearance of buildings and grounds, especially along the road, the building entrance, and rest rooms.
- Start communicating at birth/baptism. Seeds may germinate later
- Current customers who are satisfied with the purchases they have made are the best sources for future sales.
 - First increase retention of current students.
 - Set a goal and work toward it.
 - Implement a transition plan to fully welcome and integrate every new student AND their family.
 - Utilize “mentor” families
 - Second, invest time, talent, and funds into attracting new students.
 - Focus on your school’s entrance points: the lowest age/grade and then other common entrance points.

In the Community

- Get out of the building!
 - Visit “feeder” programs. Visit potential “feeders”.
 - Don’t forget home schoolers.
 - Staff speaker’s bureau for church and community.
 - Participate in community service events
 - Involve school in parades, festivals, etc.
- Check with your Chamber of Commerce on how they support small businesses.
 - Links on their site for your school?
 - Workshops?
 - Benefits of Chamber membership like “rubbing elbows” with local business leaders and political leaders.

- Utilize logoed giveaways: pencils, pens, reusable shopping bags, water bottles, yard signs, bumper strips, business cards, vehicle magnets (from bumper strip size to 12"x18"), etc.
- Invite community to "your house".
- Take your school to its primary market at churches without schools, etc.
- Talk with and learn from other schools. Participate in the PSD School Ministries Admissions Director Network, Join LEA to get on the LEADnet listserve.
- Moveable display – professional quality. Use even when it seems no one is paying attention...
- Sponsorships – event at a "feeder" or potential feeder. Local public TV auction donation.
- Purchase lists of new homeowners.
- Keep an eye on lists of schools on the web. Is information on your school correct? Comments positive? www.privateschoolreview.com; www.greatschools.net/

After enrollment application received:

- Talk about Interviews and testing as this emphasize that your school is special and not for everyone.
- Keep it formal but personable.
- Call to inform families of the fantastic news that their child has been accepted or that the school is not able to meet the child's needs.
- Mail a formal letter of acceptance with a note from the child's future teacher, a classmate, etc
- Add to newsletter mailing/e-mailing list.
- "Class Ambassador" contacts to answer questions make personal connections.
- Welcome-to-the-School Event
- Back-to-School Class Event
- Before first day of school: Home visit, assign a mentor family
- Brief contact after first day. By teacher.
- Brief contact after first week. By administrator. Anything to be done to make you more comfortable?
- Brief contact after first month. Teacher or administrator. Parents/child making friends? Any academic needs?
- Brief contact at mid-year. Administrator. Are we what you were told?