

ADVISORY

SEVEN MUST-KNOW MARKETING PRINCIPLES

by Christina Drouin

1. Isn't marketing the same as public relations or communications? Sales, advertising, or promotion?

Although communications is a part of marketing, marketing is not communications. Although advertising is a part of marketing, marketing is not advertising. Although sales is a part of marketing, marketing is not sales. And although promotion is a part of marketing, marketing is not promotion.

A school marketing plan will not be a communications, advertising, sales or promotion plan. And it will include all three.

"When improving the quality of life of individuals is at the core of an organization, rather than the manufacturing of products, the type of marketing activity that organization engages in is called social marketing." Philip Kotler

Peter Drucker even goes as far as to say that sales and marketing are antithetical. The aim of marketing, he says, is to make selling superfluous. The aim of marketing is to know the customer (read: constituent, current-past-future family, student, donor, alumni, etc.) so well that the product or service fits him or her and sells itself. Marketing should result in a customer who is ready to buy.

A school marketing system is a management tool that

is used to research, analyze, plan and evaluate ways to create and enhance desired exchanges between the school and its target constituents in order that the school has the resources it needs and desires to carry out its mission.

2. Why is the way schools market called "social marketing"?

Social marketing, as opposed to the more familiar industrial marketing with its manufacturing and selling of widgets and gadgets, taps into the core values of teaching. Consider the social marketing definition from Philip Kotler, who was one of the first to apply marketing principles to nonprofit organizations. In his 1975 classic, *Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*, Kotler differentiates that "social marketing is the design, implementation, and control of programs seeking to increase the acceptability of a social idea, cause, or practice in a target group. It utilizes market segmentation, consumer research, concept development, communications, facilitation, incentives, and the exchange theory to maximize target group response."

3. How can I get faculty to buy-into marketing?

Techniques, tools and definitions aside, it is the *purpose* of social marketing that resonates with faculty. The goal of social marketing is a changed life. This is the same reason most teachers are in the classroom.

Once the purpose of marketing is understood, it is important to involve faculty in all aspects of creating and implementing a marketing system, from research to implementation. As Catherine Grace O'Neill put it in *Marketing Independent Schools in the 21st Century* (2001 NAIS), "...everyone in a school community is a guardian of the institution's mission – from the head of school to the first graders on their journey through learning. As an independent school marketer, your job is to make sure that all your constituents understand your mission, articulate it eloquently in what they say and do, and take it fully to heart. Your job is to listen, reflect, to communicate, and to enlighten. You, too, are an educator."

4. What is the principle of exchange and why is it important?

The principle of exchange is at the core of marketing. This is the foundation of all marketing theory and presumes that the school has something of value for each constituent. Marketing in a school setting seeks to create the system of exchanges that will result both in constituents **and** the school getting what each needs and wants from its relationships, products and services.

Exchanges answer the question: what need, want or desire does an offering satisfy for both the school and a particular constituent or constituency? It is a primary task of the marketer to help the school understand and manage their exchanges. A worthwhile marketing exchange wherein the expectations of both parties are met is the ultimate goal of segmenting and targeting.

5. What is segmentation?

Segmentation is a marketing strategy used by schools that acknowledge that they cannot serve the whole marketplace effectively. The school chooses a limited number of segments to serve and differentiate its programs for those markets. A market segment is a group of people with similar wants, needs and desires with whom the school desires an exchange. Within market segments, the school will identify targets. Market segments are 1) identifiable, 2) homogeneous, 3) measurable, and 4) reachable.

6. What defines a target market?

Marketing targets are the result of breaking down each market segment into its smallest parts. Target marketing answers the question: Of our many markets, which are our primary ones? Once these are identified, the school will categorize them in terms of relationships and objectives and then rank them in order of relative importance. A target market is a market segment that the school prioritizes and attempts to reach by logic, emotion and/or persuasion. When using a differentiation strategy, school marketer will select separate strategies, tactics and promotional tools for each target market. Target markets for schools can be organizations, groups, individuals, as well as specific areas of interest or concern such as fund raising sources, legislative bodies, media, and referral channels.

7. What is differentiation and why is it important?

Typically, schools will decide to adopt a differentiation strategy by restricting their marketing to two or more market segments within a target market and designing separate services and/or programs for each. School adoption of this strategy eliminates "shotgun" promotion/advertising/publicity efforts and launches targeted messages delivered to segmented audiences using communications vehicles they prefer. Differentiation saves time and money. It also dramatically improves the effectiveness of all school communications, image and identity development, and positioning strategies.

