

Essential Elements of Multi-Component Marketing for K-8 Schools

Presenter: Jodie Aakko

Discover practice-tested strategies for increasing enrollment and community support for your K-8 school. Learn fun and innovative ideas, including home visitations. In addition, we will look at the different components of marketing, so you can avoid the common pitfall of focusing on a one-audience segment.

Marketing: “Building Relationships”

Turning-out Changed Lives

The first step in effective, enjoyable marketing is to correctly understand the definition and purpose of marketing. Marketing is the relationship your school has with others, which in turn grows the school. Marketing is not merely a means to increasing enrollment. Do not recruit for the purpose of feeling pressure to increase enrollment and improve the school budget. Do it for these reasons:

1. Why do we want kids at our school?
 - a. So they can daily experience Jesus in a transforming way. Our students receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. This is where Jesus wants His children.
 - c. We nurture the future of our church. Leadership opportunities, character building, and student potentials are at the heart of our education system.
 - d. Kids are loved by our teachers genuinely, unconditionally, and continuously. This creates the healthy learning environment that fosters outstanding academics.

2. Why is it fun to tell others about your school?
 - a. It’s what Jesus wants us to do!
 - b. It’s creating relationships.

Components of School Marketing

1. School→ Church
2. School→ Home
3. School→ Students
4. School→ Community

Too often, schools concentrate on only one marketing component: potential students. To effectively market your school, keep regular positive connections with your churches, families, students, and community. By focusing on each marketing component, the school system will market itself, because the school's culture is therefore regarded as safe, effectual, and enjoyable.

School→ Church

To grow the school's relationship with the church, consider the following

1. Weekly Chapels
 - a. This is not just an opportunity for the pastor to visit. If the pastor speaks twice a month, invite a different church member on the other weeks. When other church members visit, they have a fun time—and that creates relationships.
2. Education Sabbath
 - a. This is an entire program dedicated to Education. Every part of the program is presented by students, or an adult speaking on behalf of education. Student testimonials, parent testimonials, pastor or conference officer preaching about the importance of SDA education.
 - i. Once every school year, preferably every spring, about three weeks prior to spring school visitation/spring registration.
3. Monthly Church Programs
 - a. School choir, drama team, or hand bells. Visits every two months. Supplement visits with students giving scripture, prayer, or offering call. If the school has more than one constituent church, then these visits will be shared.
4. Church Bulletin Board
 - a. Teachers take turns setting-up the new monthly bulletin board. This large bulletin board can have a different theme each month, but should always include student work and student photos. Example: For September, create a large tree with a student picture and quote on each branch. Title, "Growing in Jesus." Student testimonials on the board. Don't let the bulletin board just be a place for announcements—that does not grow relationships.
5. Bulletin Inserts

- a. Teachers, and some students, take turns printing an insert that is stuffed in each bulletin each week. The top portion includes a two-month calendar events announcement. The remaining space is dedicated to paragraphs reporting on the school week, such as what students learned, who visited as guest speakers, and what is in store next week. Don't forget to include humor, student quotes, volunteer testimonials, student of the month, teacher bios, quizzes, etc.
- 6. Visit non-SDA Churches
 - a. Would other churches in your area enjoy a visit from your school, such as the choir? There is no harm in asking. Start with calling the churches who don't have a school.
- 7. Vacation Bible School
 - a. Most teachers are too busy to be in charge of VBS, but serving as a craft helper on one day is easily doable! Do this every summer, and you will meet many new families. Visit with each new family at VBS and invite them to consider your school.
- 8. SDA Church History Sabbath
 - a. Pathways includes an SDA pioneers book in 8th grade. This is an excellent opportunity for the 8th grade class to present an "SDA Church History" program during church. Each student presents a mini bio of an SDA pioneer, concluding with how this generation will carry on the torch. After all, many SDA pioneers were in their teens and twenties!

School→ Home

To grow the school's relationship with the home, consider the following

- 1. Social Events
 - a. Never miss an opportunity for people to get together and have fun, all in the name of your school! This is one of the greatest marketing opportunities ever.
 - i. *July*: Swimming. Always have a social in the summer to keep-up relations. Encourage students to invite two new friends each.
 - ii. *August*: Parent Meet and Greet on first weekend. First Sabbath of the school year. Pot-luck after church, then walk or bike a path. Invite returning students, new students, school volunteers, and area pastors.
 - iii. *October*: Fall festival. Advertise this hugely. Class booths, pathfinder booth, church booths, etc. Fun activities, food, and crafts. Bounce house, hay ride, pie-throwing, etc. This event will attract more people than all other events. When someone is on your campus, then your school is being marketed, and relationships are growing.
 - iv. *November*: Grandparents and Veterans Appreciation Banquet. You must have one event each year where the red carpet is rolled out for special guests. This banquet will market your schools for support from older people. This event is

exclusively for students' grandparents, every church member of grandparent age, and any veteran. Students host the event: greeters, coat clerks, seat guests, waiters, bus tables. Every student serves in at least one capacity. Tables are decorated, and a hot meal is served. Parent kitchen volunteers must not be someone on the invite list. Students must sit at each table and visit with guests. Students wear black and white (tie, skirts). After meal, the student program is National Anthem, grades 5-8 patriotic program, and K-4 Grandparent program. Guests leave with gift of carnation. Free event.

v. *December*: Christmas Program

vi. *February*: Pie Auction or Art Auction

1. First thirty minutes of the evening is "classroom open house." Students are at desk, schoolwork is displayed. Always have one event each school year that displays the student's finest school work.

vii. *April*: Spring Program

viii. *May*: Awards Night, Agape Feast, Graduation

1. Awards Night must include appreciation gifts to all school volunteers. This strengthens relationships.

b. Communication of school social events

- i. Always communicate your events thoroughly and with great enthusiasm. Announce long in advance, repeatedly. Poor communication will make the event flop.

2. Volunteer Opportunities

- a. When a church member volunteers at your school, a relationship is formed. Volunteers can listen to a child read, help a student with math, answer phones, organize areas, put up bulletin boards, make copies, care for grounds, etc.

3. Gym Nights, Game Nights, Video Nights

- a. Not just for school families. Everyone is invited.

4. Parent Appreciation Day

- a. To strengthen relationships with parents, have a surprise day for parents. Teachers sign a card for each parent, and hand a muffin and a juice to each parent when they drop-off in the morning. This is a parking lot activity—drive-up service!

5. Parent Newsletter

- a. Weekly newsletter, which includes student logo and mission statement at top, is key to creating relationships with parents. Send same as email.

6. Home Schoolers Newsletter

- a. Find a volunteer to serve as liaison for home schoolers. A quarterly newsletter includes announcements and invitations, and educational ideas, crossword, and tidbits from students.
- 7. Home Schoolers Partner Programs
 - a. PE, music, art, Spanish classes, reading buddy time, school events, field trips. All home school families must feel as if the school considers them friends. They are a part of your school family. This relationship should be positive and active.
- 8. School board meetings
 - a. Your school's parents should feel they have a voice. Why not hold the school board meeting fifteen minutes after school dismissal, making it convenient for parents to attend? When parents hear the school operations in action, they are more likely to volunteer, more likely to offer solutions, and more likely to remain satisfied.

School → Students

To grow the school's relationship with the students, consider the following

- 1. Potential Students
 - a. Gift Bags and Home Visits
 - i. Collect names of any potential student. Ask church members, existing school families, conference records department, and nearby SDA churches. Talk with each Sabbath School teacher, and the church member who seems to know everyone. Set a high goal of how many names you want to collect.
 - ii. Purchase gift bags, insert:
 - 1. Letter from principal
 - 2. Colorful stationary with hand-written student message about the school, and signed by each student
 - 3. Professionally printed full-color postcard advertising school open house and registration
 - 4. Professionally printed full-color school brochure
 - 5. Gift items such as fruit, cookies, toys, school supplies
 - 6. Print a ten-page school coloring book that has school name on front, with student artwork
 - iii. Teachers make home deliveries every spring. Surprise visit at the door to drop off the bag. Stay at the door and give a five minute speech about school, invite them to check-out the school. For visits inside the home, call to make appointment first.
 - iv. *Visit (or drop-off bag) homes even if you think there is little chance of interest. It is only important that they feel invited. Every parent should receive a personal invitation to an Adventist school!*

- b. Communication
 - i. Five minute rule. Return each phone call, or initiate each phone call, within the first five minutes you have free. When speaking to parent, get student names, ages, and address. Consider hand-delivering the school information instead of dropping it in the mail.
- c. Open School/Visitation Day and Registration Night
 - i. Open School/Visitation: Red Carpet treatment. Greet at door, two students assigned as official friend to each visitor, desk and supplies for each visitor, snacks, small gifts, school information, teacher information packet, classroom objectives, school calendar, financial information, school supply list, visit with parent.
 - ii. Registration: Greeters, fresh flowers at tables, tours of school, clean, no clutter, nice grounds with flowers and balloons outside, volunteers at each table, tables decorated with school colors. Registration papers are professionally printed with school logo and mission statement at top, school video playing. Tables:
 1. Registration Papers
 2. School information and marketing materials
 3. One table for each teacher that includes school supply list, teacher goals and philosophy, sample textbooks.
 4. Game and Gift Table
 5. Music Program, Spanish, PE
 6. ACE Scholarships
 7. Many empty tables for parents to write at with pens and phone books.
 8. Financial, with school treasurer (private corner or room)
- d. Post Cards
 - i. Mass mailings of full-color post cards may be effective to announce open-house and registration. Must be full-color and professional.
- e. Professional Brochures
 - i. Do not use volunteer-produced brochure from a home computer. Brochure must have professional photos, full-color double-sided glossy thick paper, printed with no margins. If your school does not have one, then you have nothing to send out as school information. A must for every school.
- f. Local Newspaper
 - i. Paying for a school ad in the paper may be effective; an article written by a reporter on a school event is certainly effective.
- g. NAD Website

- i. The free School Connect websites are easy, fun, and impressive to the public. To most parents in this generation, a school does not exist if it does not have a web site.

h. Sign

- i. Your school is advertising every time someone looks at your building. Does it look like a school? People do not know that a McDonalds is a McDonalds unless they see the big yellow M---not by reading the word “McDonalds.” A school sign is not enough. When your school has a simple, colorful, catchy object outside the building, then it is recognized as a school. A logo, or an image of a child, etc., helps say, “This is a school where kids play and learn.”

2. Existing Students

a. Student Appreciation Day

- i. A surprise for the students each year says, “We care about you, and we like to have fun with you!” Pancake breakfast, field trip, water games.

b. Prayer Corner

- i. Send a hand-written card, signed by each teacher, home to one student every week. The card states that the teachers prayed for them in a special way that week.

c. School T-Shirts

- i. A student shows school pride when wearing their school shirt. They feel as if they “belong.” The shirt also says that the teachers consider me to be an important part of the school—they want me here! This is relationship-building.

d. Mission Statement Displayed in School Lobby

- i. School lobby should have the mission statement professionally painted on the wall. Surround the mission statement with student pictures and student quotes.

e. School Newspaper

- i. Generated by students for students, parents, board members, church members. This is different from a school newsletter. The newspaper includes news articles, announcements, opinion articles, sports articles, etc.

f. Summer School

- i. Some schools choose to offer a free summer school program. Advertise this free one-week fun program that offers fun activities that reinforce the 3R's. Consider a Mon-Thurs event, noon dismissals, separated by grades PreK-K, 1-3, 4-6, and 7-8.

- g. Spiritual Gifts Program
 - i. Brighton Adventist Academy in Colorado conducts a program which focuses on identifying, supporting, and nurturing a student's spiritual gift. Contact Brighton Adventist Academy for information. This program supports relationships between students and teachers, students and God, and students and adult mentors.

3. Alumni

- a. School History Program
 - i. Every five years or so, have a school program that features school history. Invite churches and alumni

School → Community

To grow the school's relationship with the community, consider the following

1. Community Service Programs

- a. During the first week of school, excite students to create a *community service club*.
 - i. Name: Students are creative, so let them go crazy. Acronyms or word-plays are popular. Example- "Our Hands, Jesus' Hands."
 - ii. Mission: Help students write a kid-friendly mission statement, and select a Bible text.
 - iii. Uniforms: Design a kid-approved T-Shirt for action days, or students may like the idea of wearing a hat on action days, or a specific color on action days, etc.
 - iv. Action Days: Select one day each month as action days. This is the day of community service. Students will look forward to knowing that they will do something different each month. Mark these as red-letter days that will not be a normal school day.
 - v. Sign: Build portable professional signs to post at each community service location. The sign simply says, using your school's name, "Ridgeview Adventist School Students at Work"
- b. Examples of community service ideas: volunteer at pet shelter, re-perform a school music program at a nursing home, make prayer baskets for new members or shut-ins or those taking Bible lessons (includes a basket, Bible, note pad, highlighters, packet of cocoa or tea, candies, pens, pencils, Bible promises, journals, recipes, stickers, ABC share books, Bible reading calendar), Christmas shoeboxes, homeless kits, baby food drive, Thanksgiving boxes, volunteer at food bank, sponsor an ADRA One Day School, grow plants and decorate the pot and give to shut-in, make bird houses and give to shut-in.

- c. Write your mayor, police department, chamber, and United Way and ask for ideas. Talk to your union offices and NAD about evangelistic series which students can lead-out in.
2. Contact your local newspaper and notify them of your community service projects, in hopes that they will write an article in the paper. Also, most papers print a community photo each week; send photos of school events or art projects.
3. If your school has a long chain-link fence, students can string a message using plastic cups or ribbon. "School is Fun" "We (heart) School"
4. Consider attending Chamber meetings. Make as many connections with your local government offices as possible.
5. Create a quarterly meeting with other local principals from other Christian schools. Participate in city-wide joint Christian school activities, such as a track meet.
6. Guest Speakers and Field Trips
 - a. When a guest speaker visits your school, they tell at least a dozen other people where they are going-- and that is marketing. Set-up plenty of speakers for science class and history class. Field Trips offer the same marketing advantage.
7. Education Fair
 - a. Host a community-wide event, such as a science fair, education day, theme day, or marathon. Repeat the event each year so that popularity will increase.
8. Excellent marketing tools can be found on the NAD website, such as postcards, brochures, posters, etc. Dick Duerksen videos on "Grow My School."

Checklist Prior to Recruiting

1. School grounds always pristine
2. School interior always clean, organized, cheery, display student work
3. Plan in place to return phone and email communication promptly
4. Communication between principal, teachers, pastors, chairman strong
5. Present your marketing ideas to the school board for suggestions, funding, and approval
6. Line-up marketing support with teachers and school volunteers
7. Marketing plan created in the spring for the entire next school year
8. School left in showcase condition during the summer, including classrooms
9. What has worked in the past?
10. What has not worked in the past?
11. Are we excited about this plan?

Tips for Marketing Your School

August 2011 Teachers/Pastors Convention

Rocky Mountain Conference



1. Understand the definition and purpose of marketing. Marketing is the relationship your school has with others, which in turn grows the school. Marketing is not merely a means to increasing enrollment or improving the school budget. We want kids at our schools so they can experience Jesus in a transforming way. It is where Jesus wants His children. We nurture the future of the church (leadership opportunities and character-building are at the heart of our education system). Kids are loved by our teachers genuinely, unconditionally, and continuously. And remember----marketing is fun!!!
2. Identify all school choices in your area. Familiarize yourself with the programs, the principals, and the facilities (tour if possible).
3. Compile a long list of perspective students. Get names from former school teachers, Sabbath School teachers, pastors, church members, existing school families, and the conference office church records department.
4. Make home visits! (This is actually really fun). Some principals choose to visit without making an appointment. While at the home, give printed school materials (greetings letter, brochure, school supply list, invitation to a social...), and give a small school supply gift to the children (such as a calculator, a notebook, etc.). Talk about your school, and give a personal invitation to the family to “check us out.” Most importantly, listen to them and ask them questions.
5. Get your pastor to make home visits with you. If you are successful at this, your home visits can be nearly twice as effective. “Hey, pastor, I am reserving three days this week for home visits. Are we going on MTW or TWTh?”
6. Always return phone calls/inquiries immediately. Don’t let a parent become disinterested by making them wait for information. Or, if you have their address, visit their house that very day.
7. Let your school be known in the community as a distinctly different, innovative school. Regular field trips and community service projects is a great place to start. Notify the local newspaper of your events.
8. Have impeccable grounds and a pristine facility. If your school looks unprofessional from the outside, everyone will just “keep on driving.” Indoors must be sparkly clean, no clutter, and happy displays that says “kids love it here.”
9. Create relationships with your school families and your church families. Have plenty of socials, and invite everyone! Also, consider socials that cater to a specific group, like grandparents, veterans, Dads, Moms, etc. Get people on your campus.
10. Your school must have professional marketing materials, and professional registration papers. The conference office has designed a school brochure template, and the NAD has many from which to choose. All registration papers must look professionally designed, with the school logo and mission statement on each form.
11. Consider advertising through the media, such as newspaper or mass-mailed brochures. Research to see if this is effective in your area (every place is different).
12. If a family does not enroll, make sure they are treated by you, and your school body, as part of the family.

Questions? Please email Jodie Aakko at jodieaakko@comcast.net