

The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well, that the product or service fits him and sells itself—Peter Drucker



# THE ART OF MARKETING YOUR SCHOOL



**THE EFFECTIVE**

**Catholic,**

**Faith-based**

**Parochial School**

**MARKETING PRIMER**

# Executive Summary

FRESHLY PAINTED  
DO NOT TOUCH

Overhead for any school runs pretty high, and the only way to keep the lights on is to enroll students and keep costs down. That's often easier said than done in an educational market where parents are growing more and more able to shop for schools for their children and school choice is on the rise. So how does a Catholic, faith-based, parochial school compete in this market?

K-12online has authored this e-book to explain how to effectively market your school and the reasons behind those marketing strategies. We will be answering the marketing principles of WHO, WHAT, WHY and HOW as it relates to your school.

# WHO?

## WHO IS YOUR MARKET?

It's important to understand who these prospective parents are so that you can effectively market to them.

1

Your parents are Generation Xers (Born 1965-1979) and Generation Yers (Born 1980-1994). It's important to know this because understanding their characteristics helps you to market to them better.

According to Identifying, understanding (and marketing to) the generations



- ecology-minded,
- tech-savvy,
- easily-distracted (have short attention spans)
- family-oriented (hold family life dear)
- Defining events -rising divorce rates
- PC revolution during their childhood.

- tech-savvy
- socially and environmentally aware
- pro-community
- pro multi-culturalism
- Defining events -birth of the web
- boom and bust of the dotcom era,
- 9/11
- growth in social media

2

Most parents want the same thing: the best education and opportunities for their children possible. Likely your school has what it takes to fit this bill. However, are potential private school parents shopping for something different? Parents willing to pay tuition are searching for more than what current local public schools can provide. These parents will consider a number of factors, but they will ultimately choose a school based on four principles:

**DOES THE SCHOOL ALIGN WITH THEIR FAMILY VALUES?**

**DOES IT SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL NEEDS?**

**DOES IT FULFILL HOPES FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE?**

**DOES THE SCHOOL CARE ABOUT THEM AND THEIR CHILDREN?**


# What?

## What is your product?

Yes, you are in the business of educating children, but how are you differentiating your education from the local public school? What makes your school special and do prospective families identify with your school?



brand



Successful branding creates an immediate and ongoing emotional connection between the school, its community, and its prospective families. Educational institutions across the world have realized that a positive school brand is vital to both student enrollment and retention. This level of cohesiveness and focus can not only increase prospective parent interest remarkably, but also improve current parent retention. It's important that your brand clearly sends the right message to prospective and current families in a relatable manner.

# How?

## How is your school marketed?

So, how does your school convey to your parents that your school meets all their criteria in a meaningful way?



Specifically, how does a school market to a group of

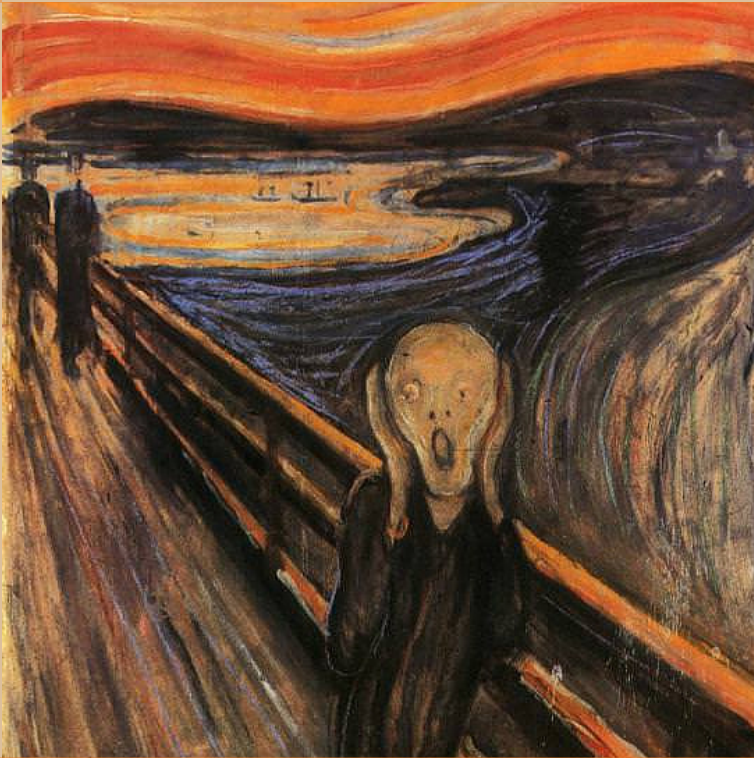
- eco-friendly,
- tech-savvy,
- impatient,
- easily-distracted,
- pro multi-cultural
- family-oriented parents

that your school

- aligns with their family values,
- supports their children's academic and socio-emotional needs,
- fulfills hopes for their children's future
- cares about them and their children?



# 1. First Impressions are lasting impressions.



Parents have plenty of choices to shop around for a school where they can enroll their children, which means they won't stick around if they think they're wasting their time for any reason. The application process is sometimes a major roadblock, because it's the biggest time sink they encounter while looking for schools.

If the user experience during the application and registration process for students is not stellar, this sends a subliminal negative message to the parent. Parents may think this school gives off the attitude that “we are doing you a service” rather than “how can we be of service to you?” or prospective parents may feel that you may not have a state of the art education when you are using archaic processes or the school is uncaring because the user experience during application and registration was cold and impersonal.

# Things to think about!

How is your user experience for potential parents?

\* Using an online system rather than paper enhances the user experience

Are they filling out copious paper forms with redundant information before they even know whether their child will be accepted?

\* A 2-step application process makes them feel that you value their time

Are parents being inconvenienced by having them bring in paperwork to the school?

\* A system that enables them to upload documents will help

Are your questions meaningful during the application and registration process?

\* Questions asked when the school was established may no longer be relevant! Revisit your application regularly.





## 2. Brand identity



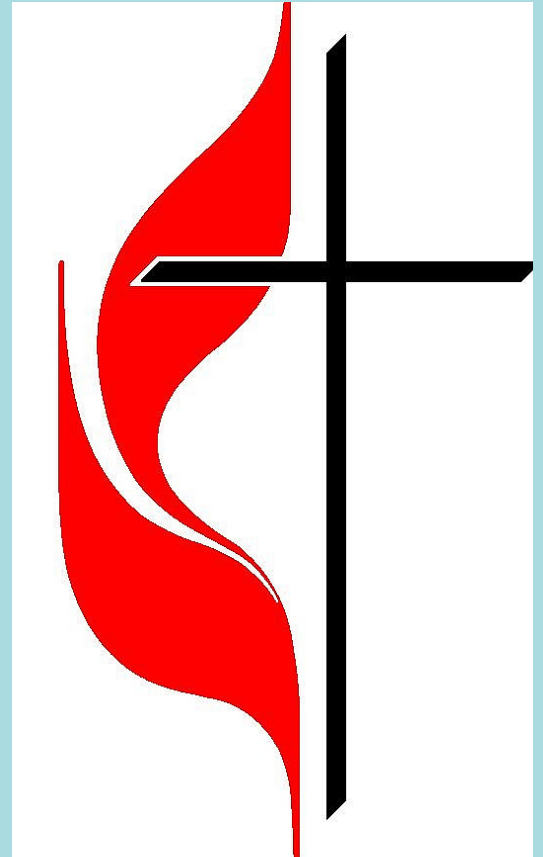
When considering the focus of your school's brand, think of what your school does best and go from there. Whether it's academic, artistic, or athletic success, your school should include these facets on your branding tools. Also, consider elements that prospective and current families might find most appealing about your program, and then center your school branding on this message. A positive, strong brand allows parents to better understand the school and feel confident in their decision. !

**THE PHILOSOPHIES THAT EACH SCHOOL ESPOUSES, ALONG WITH THE IDEALS WHICH IT STRIVES FOR, SHOULD BE CRYSTAL CLEAR TO THOSE IN ITS COMMUNITY SO THAT THESE PARENTS ARE YOUR NUMBER ONE SPOKESPEOPLE AND MARKETING VEHICLE!**



# How to incorporate faith into a branding message?

Faith-based schools offer a unique component for families. Across the nation, parents regularly include faith and religion as top priorities in their child's education. For many families, a faith-based atmosphere is vital to a healthy learning community. Since faith-based schools are reaching out to a selective niche of potential members, it is vital to prominently include this core aspect in your school branding. Whether via religious symbols used in a logo, key religious characteristics used written in a motto, or scriptural passages highlighted on letterhead, implementing a clear faith-based message will help to reach the proper families.



### 3. How are you portraying a caring environment?



American Gothic by Grant Wood 1930

A picture is worth a thousand words!

How do you provide a welcoming and personal message to your parents?

\*Embed welcome videos from principal and teachers in your online application.



Do parents know you care?

\*Lead by example

\*Send personal notes or a phone call.



Do parents know you are instilling these values to their children?

\*Showcase stories, testimonies and commendations to the community at large through articles in the newsletter, local newspaper or shared on social media?

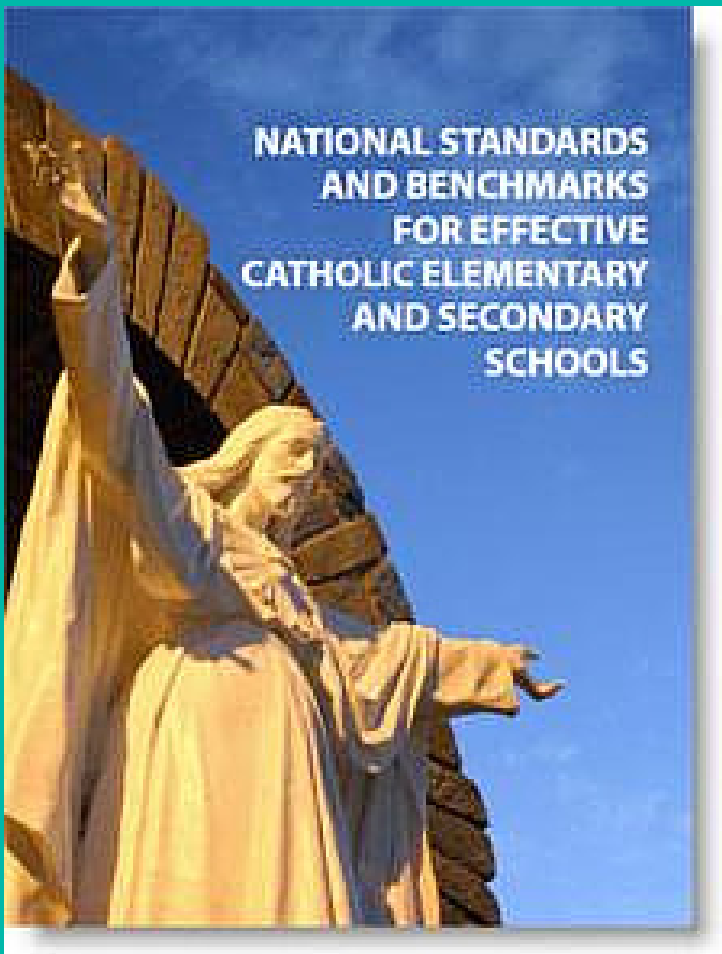


# 4. How satisfied are your parents?

It is easier and less costly to keep a seat filled than to get it filled. So, how are you doing in this area? How do you know if your parents are satisfied with your school? How can you improve, because there's always room for improvement. Monthly coffees with the principal, focus groups, PTA meetings are helpful but many dissatisfied parents will not participate in these public forums. They would rather be silent and just look for another school. So how do you find out your areas of weakness? Ask.

# PTA<sup>®</sup>

The National Catholic Education Council came out with a 42 point questionnaire surveying parents on their school experience. Wouldn't this be a great way to know exactly how your current parents are feeling every year? Do you have this in place? Let's face it, you don't know what you can improve upon unless you ask the "customer", and a happy customer is a loyal customer.

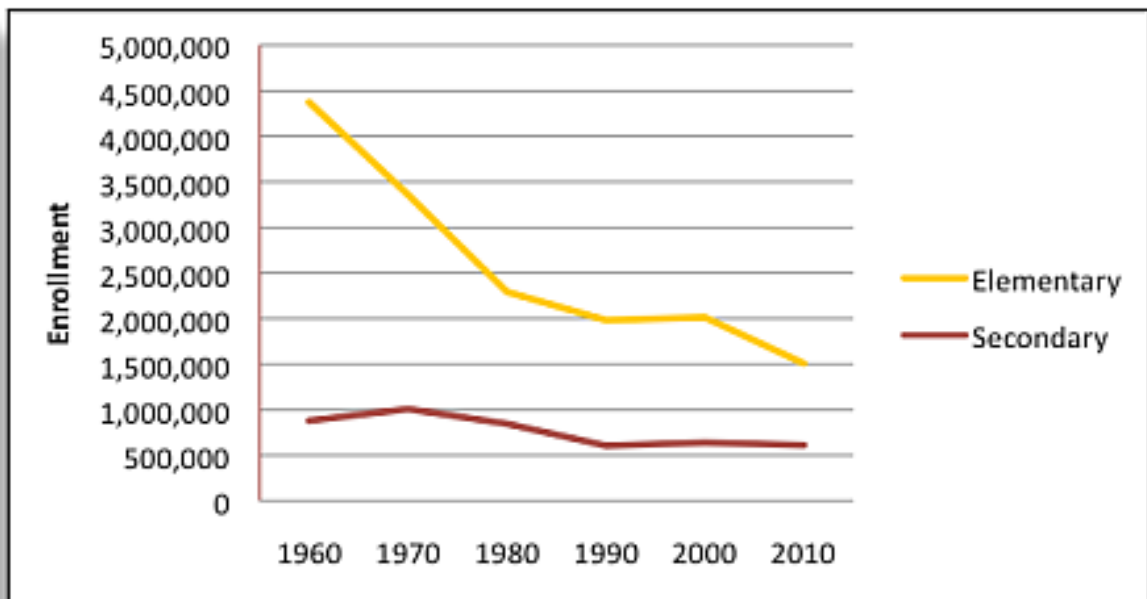


# Why?

## Why market your school?

**Figure 2.**

**Enrollment in Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1960 to 2010**



Overall, the number of student enrollment in Catholic, faith-based and other parochial schools has dropped with the rise of public charter schools, home-schooling and online learning.

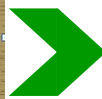
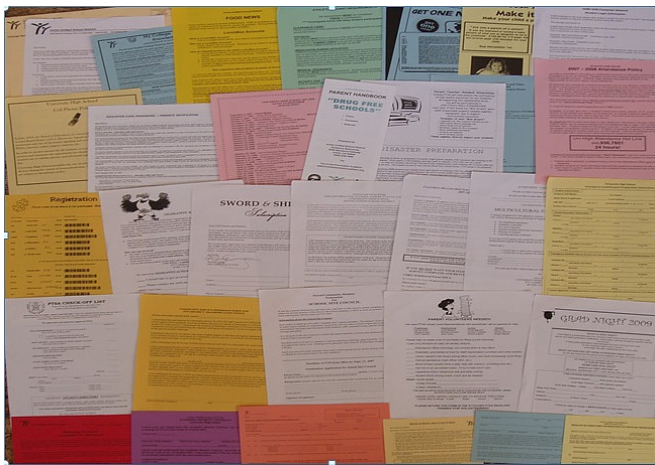
There IS a need for these schools for those parents whose faith is important to them, especially when there are news reports of a **public school refusing to let a child pray before lunch** or **being suspended for reading the Bible**. However, for the many other luke-warm Catholic parents, Catholic school may not be on their radar screen, because these parents don't realize the unquantifiable benefits of a faith-based education. As these parents are shopping for a school, are you marketing your school in a way that makes your school the hands down winner? After all, aren't we instructed to teach His ways so that they can walk in his paths (Isaiah 2:3)

# Need help?



Since faith based schools are in a competitive environment, these schools often require more marketing to reach their target, so it is vital to create strong, clear messages. **K-12 Online**, a faith based company can do that.

Eliminating paper application and registration forms immediately brings the school to the 21st century and sends a message that your school is technologically advanced and their child will get a state-of-the-art education!



Welcome, Jack Smith

Western Mennonite School  
Equipping students for a life of faith & learning

HOME WEBSTORE ORDER HISTORY SHOPPING CART CHANGE ACCESS KEY STUDENT'S SIBLINGS FORM SELECTION LOGOUT

### Registration Forms

Please pay the following:

Broken iPad	600.00
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[Pay now](#)

Messages:

- Jack Smith Go see Counselor before registering
- Jack Smith changed his/her physical address on 02/25/2015.

Instructions: Click on the title of each form. Once the form has been viewed / acknowledged, you will receive a green check mark. You will only be able to complete registration when all the forms have green checkmarks. Please remember to **print out your form and bring it back during registration.**

[click on image for Principal's welcome message](#)

1	Student Information	✓
2	Student Emergency Contacts	✓
3	School Handbook	✓
4	Media Release Form	✓
5	Health History	✓
6	Sports Physical Form	✗
7	Military Release of information Form	✗
8	PTSA Volunteer	✗
9	Family Directory	✓
10	Back-to-School Must Haves	✓
11	RS Verification of Information	✓

[Click here to complete registration process](#)

By using this online registration process, you will be deemed to have accepted the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy

**Learn More!**

# Need help?



**K-12 Online** can also help standardize your brand and message across logos, taglines and more to establish your school's faith-based identity.

The screenshot shows the user interface of the Bethany School K-12 Online registration system. At the top, a banner features the school's logo with the text "BETHANY SCHOOL" and the tagline "a place to believe, achieve and succeed". To the right of the logo is a photo of four children and a "Select Language" dropdown menu. Below the banner is a navigation bar with links for HOME, WEBSTORE, ORDER HISTORY, SHOPPING CART, FORM SELECTION, STUDENT'S SIBLINGS, and LOGOUT. A green checkmark message states "You have successfully logged in." Below this is a "Form Selection" section with the heading "Please check the additional forms that may apply to your student." The user's name, "Quintin Salas", is displayed. A text box contains the instruction: "Check all the categories that apply. Additional required forms will be added based on your selection." There is one checkbox labeled "International Student" which is currently unchecked. A blue "Submit" button is located below the form. At the bottom of the page, a dark blue footer contains the text: "By using this online registration process, you will be deemed to have accepted the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.", "CHALKABLE", "K-12 Online: Powered by Jireh Infosystems", and "Contact Us".

**Learn More!**

# Need help?



**K-12 Online's** customizable video welcome message and teacher videos provide a warm, personal touch. These videos are embedded on school-specific forms and displayed prominently on web-based registration pages.

The screenshot shows a web page for 'OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: HOME, WEB STORE, ORDER HISTORY, SHOPPING CART, STUDENT'S SIBLINGS, FORM SELECTION, and LOGOUT. A 'Select Language' dropdown menu is also visible. The main content area is titled 'Kindergarten Welcome' and features a video player with a red play button. Below the video, the text reads: 'Ms. Mindy's Kindergarten Message'. The message content includes: 'Welcome Parents of Kindergartners!', 'We are SO excited that you are going to be part of our wonderful loving community. We have so much planned. Please save the date for BACK TO SCHOOL night on September 30th when we'll talk about the curriculum, our philosophy and get to know you all on a more personal level. We do want you to be aware of the following:', 'Monday Folders: Folders with the week's homework handed out to students', 'Friday Folders: Folders of the week's homework brought back to school', 'Wednesday Morning: Student of the Week presentation. Your student will have the opportunity to present himself/herself to the class. This will be your opportunity to come in and video your child.', 'Birthdays: Should you wish to celebrate your child's birthday - We will do it before breaktime at 11.00am. Please plan accordingly.', 'Until then, Blessings. Ms. Mindy'

**Learn More!**




# Need help?



**K-12 Online's** NCEA Benchmarks survey template allows schools to ask parents about their current experience to maintain / improve student retention.

Welcome Lisa Luna

 OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Select Language ▼

HOME WEBSTORE ORDER HISTORY SHOPPING CART STUDENT'S SIBLINGS FORM SELECTION LOGOUT

→ Catholic Identity Program Effectiveness Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Instructions: The following statements are to find out how you feel about your school. This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please rate the following statements from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1)

Everyone in the school community - administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians, alums, and supporters - knows and understands the school's mission. \*

Everything we do in our school is guided and directed by our mission. \*

Our school mission clearly expresses a commitment to Catholic identity. \*

Our school provides an academically rigorous Catholic religion program, taught by qualified teachers. \*

In all subjects, teachers help students think critically and ethically about the world around them, using the lens of Gospel values and Catholic doctrine and beliefs. \*

Our school provides opportunities outside the classroom for students' faith formation and participation in retreats, prayer, Mass, sacraments, and other spiritual experiences. \*

Our school provides opportunities outside the classroom for students to participate in service activities for social justice. \*

K-12 Online is home to experienced consultants eager to help you with a strong, consistent branding campaign, streamlined online application and registration and features that adhere to NCEA benchmarks.

[Learn More!](#)