



School marketing 101: How to help your school shine its brightest

Calgary City Teachers' Convention
February 17, 2006
Sarah Elaine Eaton, M.A.



Agenda

- Introduction
- Overview - Marketing in educational institutions
- How to shine your brightest!
- Looking towards the future
- Conclusions



Introduction

- Sarah Eaton, M.A.
 - Background
 - *101 Ways to market your language program, 2nd edition (2005)*
 - Ph.D. student in Educational Leadership at the U of C.

- In the first activity I'll ask you to introduce yourselves to each other.



Objectives

- Discuss marketing of educational institutions in broad terms.
- Discuss perceptions of using business practice and terminology in education.
- Dialogue about current practices.
- Highlight research and current trends in marketing of education.
- Possible implications for the future.



Overview - Marketing in educational institutions – Activity One

Objective: To explore and share your perceptions about marketing of educational programs.

To be done in pairs or groups of 3 or 4.

- Introduce yourself and exchange business cards.
- Briefly discuss why you came to this session today.
- Without going into details about how you market your own institution, take a moment just to talk about what marketing of education means to you. Are you in favour of it? Is it just a necessary evil? Do you love the idea of marketing your school?

Time allotted: 5 minutes.



Marketing as part of management

Linda Vining states:

“The word ‘marketing’ used to be a negative concept to educators. Not anymore... School marketing has been transformed into an essential management function.”

(Vining, 2000).



What is marketing, anyway?

The Department of Marketing at Monash University offers this definition of marketing:

"Marketing is a fun, dynamic, complex activity (and discipline) that focuses on providing value to both organisations and consumers. Very simply marketing is about matching what an organisation has (or can do) with someone who wants it."



Is it just semantics?

Until recently, we have avoided using business terminology to discuss educational administrative practices. That is changing.

The concept of marketing in schools is not new, but the use of business terms to describe it is:

- Private schools have sought to recruit the “right kind of students”, known in business as the “target market”.
- School crests, colors, jackets and rings identify students, faculty and alumni of the school immediately, also known as “branding”.
- We’ve been “marketing” educational institutions for decades, if not centuries. We just haven’t always called it by that name.



The bottom line is..

- ... business and educational management practices are more inter-twined now than ever before.



Another way of looking at it...

Marketing your school means:

1. **Believe** in your school, your staff and your students.
2. **Strive** to be the best you can be – then be proud of your achievements and
3. **Shine** for the the world to see.

Consistently.



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Marketing in perspective

Alberta > Canada > North America > World
Or better put ...

World > North America > Canada

- Australia and New Zealand lead the way when it comes to marketing educational programs.
- The U.S. isn't far behind.



Let's see what the neighbors are up to...

How the U.S. partners with business to lure students:

- **September 2004 - Duke University gave its freshman students iPods, a digital music player that comes with ear-bud headphones and a mic attachment.**
- **Value: \$500,000 USD. (Carlson, 2004)**

"Students themselves recognize this as a marketing tactic on the part of the school, but since they benefit from it, they don't protest." (Carlson, 2004)



But don't stop there...

- State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Morrisville gave 1800 students living in residence free Motorola i205 cell phones. Officials told students that other brands of cell phones would not get a strong signal, or perhaps, no signal at all.
- The University of Maryland at College Park offered 320 students in its M.B.A. program a BlackBerry 7510 personal digital assistant (Value: \$550).
- Winona State University and Mayville State University both offered undergraduate students Gateway M275 tablet PCs (Value: \$1800).
- Samford University offered its 680 freshmen a USB key-chain storage device (Value: \$20 USD).

(Carlson, 2004)



It's all about the marketing...

One significant aspect of this is that universities are partnering with corporations, in theory to benefit students by giving them gadgets they can use in their studies.

Carlson's research suggests that neither students, nor faculty, see these gadgets as having a direct link to their educational experience (Carlson, 2004.)



The Aussies – Leader of the pack

- While Canada and the U.S. may have struggled ethically and morally with the idea of the hybridization of business and education, the Australians have been busy integrating the two at the rapid pace, becoming the world leaders in shifting this paradigm. One way this has been done is through a dramatic increase in international students, to the point where one in every five students at Australia universities is from abroad (Marginson, 2002.)
- This means huge income from external revenue sources for Australian institutions.



How did they do it?

- This shift began in the mid 1980s, at a time when Australian universities received 85% of their funding from public sources and did not charge tuition. The government changed its policy, cutting funding to public institutions, while encouraging them to charge – and retain – full tuition from foreign students, effectively turning education into an industry.
- By 2002, in comparison with the United States, had seventeen times the population of Australia, but less than four times the number of foreign students (Marginson, 2002.)
- While the U.S. may be commercializing by partnering with corporations, Australia has made big business out of marketing to international students.



From universities to K-12...

- School marketing isn't just for post-secondaries any more.
- Private schools market aggressively.
- Public schools can market, but don't.



Let's review...

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Marketing your school – Activity two

Objective: To share what you know:

To be done in pairs or groups of 3 or 4.

- Discuss how your school markets itself (if at all).
- Think about websites, brochures, events, branding or any “gimmicks” your school uses.

Time allotted: 5 minutes.



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The golden rule of marketing: Know thyself

- Before you can promote anything, you must know what it is you're promoting.
- You must know why it is important to you.
- You must know why you think it should be important to others.



Reflection – Activity four

Objective: To reflect on what your school means to you and others. To be done in pairs or groups of 3 or 4.

- List three ways your school shines. (No comparisons allowed!)
- When you think of your school, what makes you proud?



From thought to action – Activity five

Objective: To discuss how your school can shine better. To be done in pairs or groups of 3 or 4.

- How do you communicate the positive thoughts and feelings you identified in the last activity to others?
- How do you encourage your teachers and students to show their school pride?
- What else could you reasonably do?



Low cost tips and tricks

- Consistency is key:
- School colours all the time.
- Websites need to be updated regularly.
- Fizzle is the biggest enemy of promotion!



More low cost tips and tricks

- They say it is not what you do or what you say, but how you make people feel, that counts in marketing.
- Front line staff should be polite and courteous all the time.
- We are never too busy for students.
- Smiles go a long way in creating happiness!



And by the way...

- How did you do on the introduction activity at the beginning of this session?

- Business cards are a small thing... Sometimes the little things are a big deal.



Even more low cost tips and tricks

- Care for your school as your home – cleanliness, presentation, and a welcoming, safe environment are essential.
- Students, teachers, administrators – part of the same family.

Read: Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*, for inspiration.



Be care-full about how you promote

- Promotions in education does not mean cut-throat competition.
- We are all in this together.
- When you empower others, you empower yourself. When your students and teachers feel valued, proud and capable, the entire school will shine.



Live the example

Sometimes you have to get dirty
before you can shine.

Read: *An autobiography: or my
experiments with truth*, by M.K. Gandhi.



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It is OK not to be perfect

Shining means:

- Being sincere.
- Putting your best forward.
- Being honest about your strengths and weaknesses.
- Accepting the reality that no person or school is perfect. That's OK. Shine anyway.



A closing quotation...

- "... the educator must work with whatever the youngster brings to the learning situation, but the educator must never stop believing that each child is capable of something wonderful and heroic and that he or she will never exhaust his or her possibilities."

From: Starrat, R.J. "Centering educational administration: Cultivating meaning, community, responsibility."



Where do we go from here? Looking towards the future – Activity six

Objective: To reflect on what you've learned here today and think about how things may change.

To be done in pairs or groups of 3 or 4.

- Discuss these questions together with your group:
- What part of today's workshop has had the most impact on you?
- How do you think your school is doing in terms of marketing today?
- How do you think its marketing will change (if at all) in the future?
- What would this mean for your school?

Time allotted: 5 minutes.



One last review...

- Believe
- Strive
- Shine

Consistently.



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