Regional Perspective

Exceeding Expectations

John Collins – Business Revelations

Tuesday 30th July 2018

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1. First involved - **‘word of mouth’** highest in all surveys of why you contacted or enrolled at a particular school
   1. Key stakeholders – parents and staff – they will talk about the school their children attend or where they work
   2. The closer and more engaged the community the more talk there is
   3. Truth in biblical scripture – Matthew 12:34 and Luke 6:45
   4. A lot of what people speak about is very narrow, personal or ill-informed
   5. The BIG question – time to share 3 things from experience at NCC
2. **Exceeding Expectations**
   1. Initial experience a lasting one – personal experience
   2. Research what your competitors do, then do more! – ask, personal experience, mystery shopper, compliant family member
   3. Establish your ‘First contacts team’ – meet to inform and review, set standards, address difficulties, work on the ‘perfect tour’, eliminate areas of embarrassment, on average, parents visit 2-3 schools, set target for conversion from tours to application at 80%
   4. Personally engage – ask questions, kids best source, learn at least one thing of importance and test, document, try to have one area of follow-up
   5. Do the unexpected – remember their name, their children’s name, the important piece of information, write them a personal note of thanks mentioning something specific or their area of importance; use unanswered questions to demonstrate your responsiveness
3. **Engage and Inform**
   1. Be part of Staff Induction – take them on a tour (use Open Day training as excuse); highlight what increased enrolments mean to them – quantify it; then staff meetings, staff devotions, speak at PD weeks/days, assessment pieces, subject expos
   2. Be involved in P&F, ‘Friends of …’ groups, New Parent Orientation night, parents events – Information Nights, Parent/Teacher interviews, Speech Nights
   3. Identify influencers - steward and recognise them (similar concept to a major donor); bring them into the ‘inner sanctum’; focus groups; Parent Year Level Reps
   4. Source or author articles that: address areas of concern; inspiring stories; alumni stories; distinctive aspects of your school
   5. Send articles, links to influencers with personal notes prior to publishing widely; not saying that broad-based publications not influential but concentrating on fostering effective ‘word of mouth’; social media makes this simpler; SMS messaging most effective
   6. Capital Campaign – major side benefit was an informed parent body addressing issues re mission, values, vision, strategic plan, school funding, good stewardship of finances, value for money, success stories; continued dinners and social events after campaign was completed
4. **Feedback and Influence**
   1. You are no value to your institution if you know there are issues and you have no avenue to bring about a change
   2. Seat at the table – Senior Management Team, Executive, Committees
   3. Compelling data – “I know you believe *such and such* but the facts are”; importance of the school delivering what you are promising, e.g. of Hills Grammar
   4. Be part of the solution – take on key roles and responsibilities, be the driving force behind the agreed process or solution for change
   5. Feedback on progress or lack thereof – too important to let drift

**MARKETING**

1. **Understand the Buying Motives**
   1. Marketing 101 – if in doubt, test it yourself
   2. Safety – is this going to adversely disrupt my life
   3. Performance – is this going to do what it says it will
   4. Appearance – how will this make me look in the eyes of others
   5. Comfort – does this meet my expectations, don’t want more stress in my life
   6. Economy – is this good value for money
   7. Durability – does this have benefits over the long-term, is it sustainable
2. **Experience at NCC**
   1. Settled on by-line – *Security ~ Support ~ Success*
   2. Not College motto – *Sow to Harvest*
   3. Not College Values – *Worship, Stewardship, Relationship*
   4. Not easy to maintain consistency – sub-schools, Board vision statements, etc
   5. Became what NCC was known for
3. **Mottos of Regional Qld Schools**
   1. In light of above, what do these marketing by-lines say
4. **Other Marketing Considerations**
   1. Must have a Marketing Plan *(what, why, how, when, to whom)*
   2. Base major decisions on verifiable data *(surveys, geocoding)*; not just what other schools are doing
   3. Be different, creative
   4. Don’t just provide facts about programs, facilities; “we have …..”
   5. Spell out the benefits – *don’t assume they know*; must be able to answer the question *“What does this mean for the parent/student?”*; if you can’t come up with a benefit then don’t promote it; use the Buying Motives as your base
5. Can use the SIGS after the break to discuss how this plays out in your school