

Word-of Mouth Marketing

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What I did:

Concordia Academy is a Lutheran high school serving 300 students in Roseville, MN. The school has a significant amount of debt and has experienced a steady decline in enrollment over the last 5 years. We need more students. Because I had no money to invest in a traditional marketing campaign I researched and invested my time and effort into a Word-of-Mouth marketing campaign.

Our Word-of-Mouth campaign consisted of identifying 40 families who were authentic, passionate, and positive about our school. We then provided a special training for these families with the intention of equipping, inspiring, and commissioning them to do more intentionally what they were already doing –singing the praises of our school in their circles of influence. We created a monthly newsletter for these Ambassadors. The newsletter provided encouragement and the latest “good news” that they could share with others. We challenged each of our Ambassadors to introduce three new families to our school.

What did I learn?

I learned that to maximize Word-of-Mouth marketing -personal, timely, and consistent communication and encouragement is necessary with even the most loyal school supporters. People are busy, overcommitted, and without the above type of communication or better yet, *relationship*, they will simply not fully invest in their calling as Word-of-Mouth Ambassadors. I also learned that with Word-of-Mouth marketing you cannot sell what you are not. If you want only good things shared about your school you must eliminate, or at least mitigate, that which is negative about your school. Word-of-Mouth marketing is always accurate even when we might not want it to be.

What Difference Did It Make?

- Created a Word-of-Mouth marketing campaign that will continue and be further developed in the years to come.
- Increased next year’s enrollment by 20%
- Met and exceeded annual appeal goal for first time in school’s history
- Annual dinner auction fundraiser exceeded all time high for money raised