

**Van Lunen Fellows Project**  
**Increasing School Enrollment through Promoters**  
**Joseph M. Cottrell**

---

**WHAT I DID**

I put together a team of people who are willing to promote Northwest Christian School by referring, recommending and communicating vital conversational facts about the school to others in an attempt to bolster our school enrollment. Promoters would market the school to others through newspaper advertising, promotional portable lawn signs, an increased internet and Facebook presence, but mainly through face to face interaction.

I used the Parent Satisfaction and Referral Survey in conjunction with Grace Works Ministries in Colorado Springs, Colorado to obtain feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the school. This information will be utilized by our School Board to improve our educational thrust in our pursuit of excellence in regard to what is most important to our parents. The second aim of conducting the survey was to identify parents who would be willing to work towards increasing our declining enrollment. I presented a visual demonstration using one thousand dollars in cash that allowed the team of promoters to see how much cash we would have at the end of our fiscal year to motivate them to work towards increasing our enrollment and to let them understand how crucial it was to increase our enrollment because of our need for stronger financial sustainability moving into the future.

**WHAT I LEARNED**

I learned that launching an electronic survey can be challenging because of some of the intricacies in forwarding and receiving data from two parents at the same email address which requires a director who is very well versed in computer technology. I learned that this endeavor would be more profitable to launch in the fall to have time to gather data for improvement, identify promoters and give the promoters ample time to proficiently market the school to prospective parents for the upcoming year. By the time we launched our survey, it was midwinter, and I think our promoting efforts could have been potentially more fruitful if we launched earlier.

“Bribing” or giving student rewards like homework passes or dress down days along with grocery and gas gift cards drawings were successful methods in getting excellent parent participation. Although we had some technological difficulties, we had an excellent 71% participation rate.

School promotion definitely takes a team effort that utilizes different talents of individuals that market the school in a variety of ways. I also learned that in leading a promotional team you need to appeal to both sides of the brain, the rational and the emotional, but in particular, we need to stir people emotionally to take action while still providing them with facts to properly understand the need for action.

**WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?**

It laid the foundation for a team of people who will intentionally market the school in a cohesive manner, integrating key conversational points in their personal interactions. With having an intentional team of promoters, it lends itself to personal accountability and encouragement from one another to get out there and market effectively according to the team strategy, established at our initial meeting and our thirty day follow up meeting. At our thirty day follow up people heard how others in the group were interacting with prospective families. To date three new families will be coming due to the efforts of our parent promoters. Now that this team is in place, it can continue to work into the future towards the goal of increasing our school wide enrollment.