

# **Van Lunen Fellows Final Paper One Page Summary**

## **Internal and External Marketing**

John Roberts, Covenant Christian School

May 31, 2015



In March 2014 as a part of my annual review Covenant's school board asked me to increase the visibility of Covenant Christian School within the St. Louis metropolitan area. Essentially, I was asked to do a better job marketing our school outside of our immediate community.

My Van Lunen project was to develop a comprehensive internal and external marketing plan for the school. This plan was to be based on sound research that would take into account Covenant's unique vision, resources and location.

### **What Was Accomplished**

The plan, which for the most part was implemented, met with mixed results.

- Updated Website: A major component of our new marketing plan was a major overhaul of our school's website (ccsstl.org). The timing on this project was a major miss. The new site did not go up until this past March.
- Pelican Peek's: A brief opportunity for families to stop by during the course of the school day to meet with school's staff and to view the school "in action." There were six Peek's with only 12 families so this was a bit of a miss. The Peek's also added steps to the admissions process. This is under review for next year.
- Facebook Presence: Covenant's Facebook presence was substantially upgraded during this past school year. The site, on average, was updated nearly three times per week and our "likes" have more than doubled over the course of the last school year. A major hit.
- Facebook Marketing: We did an advertising campaign in late March and April through Facebook that encouraged families to look at Covenant's website. The ad popped up more than 7,000 times in a targeted marketing effort that resulted in 156 separate hits on our website at a total cost to the school of \$104. Bad timing, but a hit.
- Joint Marketing: Covenant partnered with the other Christian Schools Association of St. Louis schools to conduct marketing this past fall in various publications in the St. Louis region.
- Books for Kindergarten and Younger Visitors: A part of our plan was to give books to children who visit our school for grades Kindergarten and younger. We did not implement this this year but plan to do so next year.
- Special Promotion Science Classroom: Covenant opened its new science classroom in February. In order to promote the space, we held several open houses for families and church members. We should have done more to promote this awesome space.
- Special Promotion with Baker Creek: Toward the end of the school year we did a special promotion with one of our community partners, Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds of Mansfield, Missouri. This year we invited Quintin Eason, the chef from Baker Creek, to come to Covenant for two days to work with our students and to do a workshop for parents and others in our community. Reception was a little underwhelming, but we will be doing it again next year.
- Hallways: First, we placed framed pictures of students engaged in various activities throughout the school. Second, we developed guidelines for each class' hallway bulletin board. Third, we made a concerted effort to clean out the school's hallways of storage.
- Church Narthex: Working with the senior pastor, we were able to develop sensitively designed marketing space in the church's narthex (lobby).
- School Partnerships: For the first time ever, Covenant will be partnering with Westminster Christian Academy's Camp Westminster program to have the Junior Engineering camp at Covenant in June.

### **What Was Learned**

First, and most importantly, through this process I learned that there are a wide variety of ways that schools have available to them to effectively market their schools. Second, that it is not enough to gather all these methods and throw them against a wall and hope one (or two...) of them stick.

### **What Difference Is It Making**

Internally the marketing efforts have been well received. Externally, we are probably looking at a "too little, too late." I'm hopeful that the steps we have taken this year will pay dividends in the future.