Research Brief

Marketing Urban High Schools

Question: What are some strategies for marketing an urban high school to parents and the community?

Summary of Findings**:** In order to have effective communication with the parents and community, they must be regularly well-informed about the world their child(ren) will be facing, what makes a successful school community, how they can contribute to that success, how students and faculty are contributing to that success, what goals need to be attained, and what else is being done and needs to be done in order to move towards the goals. It is important for several different communication and marketing strategies to be used in easily understood language, as well as the primary language(s) of the community, which will have the potential to increase the trust and respect for the school as well as reaching a greater number of people.

Major Findings and Conclusions:

News Media

1. Assign a staff or several staff members to write weekly articles for the local newspaper (s) about current activities, programs, and projects. This should include announcements about and invitations to special programs being presented at the school.
2. Part of the work for the journalism class or group would be to write in- depth articles about a specific activity, program, or project and periodically submit it to the local newspaper(s).
3. Have a production team of students regularly write, produce, and present news from the school and have it shown on the local cable station, who are required to donate a certain amount of air time to the community.
4. Establish with the local radio station, a regularly scheduled time to have a representative from the school be interviewed about the programs, activities and projects.
5. One person, often the principal, should be the lead spokesperson for the school to the news media. This way the information given out can be consistent and trustworthy.

Print Media

6. A multi-colored tri-fold brochure outlining the information in number 8 could be produced and given to businesses and community agencies where it could put out for the community.
7. Send a monthly newsletter, written to the parents and community about the school's programs, activities, and projects and how those tie into the vision and goals of the school. Include the student newspaper in this. Using the U.S. postal system, mail this home, to business partners, service clubs, and other members of the community.

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Technology

8. Have a current and frequently updated school web site that presents the goals and vision for the school. The curriculum, programs, schedules, activities, assessment strategies, business and community partnerships, and newsletters, etc. should be accessible from working links where each would also describe how they fit into the goals and vision. This can be student designed and maintained.

9. Each teacher has his/her own web site, which is regularly updated with his/her philosophy, curricula, due dates, and assessment strategies listed. The teacher's email address should also be a part of this so that there is easy access and communication.

10. A compact disc with a continuous feed detailing all of the information about the goals and vision for the school, along with general information about the curricula and the school's programs could be developed by the students. Copies of these could be given to local community groups and business, such as doctors and realtors, where they could be played on an ongoing basis.

Telephone

11. The school's telephone system could provide a voice mailbox for each faculty and staff member with pertinent information on it along with the capacity for messages to be left.

12. Representatives from each grade level could contact different several parents, a representative from the community, and/or students on a weekly basis to gain information about their perceptions of the school. This information could be used as part of the data collection process and utilized to help determine directions for the school. A handwritten thank you note sent afterwards will add a personal touch as well as to let the participants know their thoughts were heard.

Meetings

13. Some meetings and gatherings lend themselves to informal settings. This type of setting may appeal to those who are not comfortable at school and/or who cannot get to the school. Hold smaller meetings at different sites and at different days and times. Some suggestions might be: a person's home, a community venue such as the Y.M.C.A., and a business's conference room.

14. Students and other representatives from school can make presentations to service clubs, business, and community groups about the school, it's goals, and how its programs are meeting the goals.

15. Meet with members of the community, business partners, and potential partners in their locations. Have students make the presentations about the school and/or a special program (s) and how it meets the goals and vision of the school.

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- New American High School
    This site presents the tenets of how a school should be structured.
    http://www.sonoma.edu/cihs/html/cihsmain/highschoolreform.htm

- Riley Cites Urban High Schools as Examples of Reform
    A list of elements that should be implemented in order for the urban high school to meet the needs of students is cited.
    http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/03-1997/urb-hs.html

- Talent Development High Schools
    Another article that cites the essential components that needs to be in place in order for an urban high school to meet the needs of students in the 21st century.
    http://www.csos.jhu.edu/tdhs/

- The Challenges of Reform. Southwestern High School.
    Detroit is the location of this high school. This article provides information on the important components that are in place in this high functioning urban high school. The website is also set up to read resource information on each component, examine how the reader would deal and/or is dealing with each area, then compare one's responses to the ways in which other urban high schools are facing them.
    http://www.ncrel.org/csri/reform/about/swest.htm

- The Million-Dollar School
    This brief article explains how through a successful business partnership, an urban high school was awarded a million dollars to support its programs.
    http://www.cgcs.org/urbaneducator/2003/feb_vol_12_no_1_article_1/feb_vol_12_no_1_article_1.html

- The Superintendent Who Listens
    This article provides a brief overview of a new superintendent in an urban district who has had to lead the community from distrust of the school system into an honest and trusting relationship.
    http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/winter99/superintendent4.html

- The Wisdom of Working Together
    An urban area suffering from high unemployment is working on overcoming the depressing and blighted conditions through partnerships with the community.
    http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/winter_98/text1.html

- The Urban High School Challenge: Ensuring Literacy for Every Child
    Interesting information as to the importance of and reasons for continued literacy development through high school is provided in this article.
    http://www.carnegie.org/pdf/literacy.pdf

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- <u>Trends in Urban Education Reported</u>
   Groups that were influential and non-influential to education were cited in this article. Influential groups included business leaders, foundations, and local education funds. Non-influential groups included federal and state government and the news media.
   http://www.cgcs.org/urbaneducator/2002/dec_vol_11_no_8_article_15/dec_vol_11_no_8_article_15.html

- <u>Turning It Around for All Youth: From Risk to Resilience</u>
   An in depth examination of the critical ingredients that an urban high school must have in order to successfully meet the needs of its student population.
    http://resilnet.uiuc.edu/library/dig126.html

- <u>What Works: Changing Communities</u>
   This is the story of a new superintendent in an urban setting who needed to reach out to the parents and community for support and respect. This article has several excellent ways in which she was able to do it.
   http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/winter99/what.html

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http://www.principalspartnership.com/