

## the not so hard **Sell**

More pupils means more funding, so make sure the outside world knows just what a great place to learn your school really is, says **Kevin Harcombe...**

### **NURSES** gain family status

- Tax free salary, with higher salary for those with longer work experience
- Family status
- Free education for to 2 children
- Housing Allowance
- Free Furnishing & amenities
- Free Transport
- Free Airfare Yearly
- 40 days Paid Vacation Yearly
- Free Medical and emergency dental cover
- End of Service Benefit
- No Placement Fee Client do the collection from work

child, grandchild, niece or nephew to your school? What, if anything, would you have to change in order to answer "yes" to that question?

Standards, behaviour, environment, safety and security, are all essential and marketable qualities. If you are an underperforming school with a falling roll, you have to raise standards at the same time as slowing or stopping the exodus. If academic standards are iffy everywhere except for Y3 then trumpet Y3! If you struggle with making an attractive environment in a difficult building you can at least make sure it's clean and tidy with vibrant, colourful displays, free of hazards and secure.

### 2 **Price – spend wisely**

In education price relates to resources, trips, clubs, training and CPD, pay, subsidised activities, and the way you use your budget to provide top value for money for children, parents and staff.

### **BTW. Y NT TXT? 😊**

**A text messaging service can be obtained for less than a thousand a year and they are worth every penny at getting through to even hard to reach parents. Strong communication is a key marketing tool. LOL!**

A distributor of office and computer products is in "URGENT" need of individuals to fill-up the following positions:

#### **ACCOUNTING / AUDITING STAFF (2)**

- Male / Female, not more than 30 years old
- BS in Accountancy graduate
- At least 6 months experience in related field
- Extensive knowledge on merchandise inventory and general accounting functions
- With good analytical skills

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANT**

The very phrase "marketing your school" will send some teachers into paroxysms of rage amid cries of "We're not a meat pie factory!" Indeed, no, but schools are principally funded on a "bums on seats" basis: the more children you have, the more money you get and the more you can do with it.

Marketing helps attract and keep new parents, children and staff and makes existing ones feel positive about being a part of your school. These groups, plus the wider community, are the main targets of any marketing you do.

### **The four Ps...**

There are four principles of marketing— Product, Price, Packaging and Promotion – and each needs your attention.

#### **Product – what are you selling?**

The best marketing in the world will be unconvincing if the product – in schools, what you do and achieve – is poor.

If choice became a reality tomorrow, would your school be the pick of the bunch? If not, why not? Would you send your own



## 'Hidden' marketing

### MAKE THE MOST OF JOB VACANCIES...

Just like anything that is published in your school's name, a vacancy is a chance to say as much about your school as about the type of person you are trying to attract. In a hundred words or so you need to communicate what a brilliant place your school is to attract the brightest and best candidates.

"We are thirty happy Y4 children looking for a fantastic teacher to work with us. We are polite, kind and hard working (mostly) and would really like a teacher like us. Our headteacher says he makes the staff work hard but also makes sure they have plenty of time for themselves and their family and friends too. Come and visit to see if you like us."

## 4 Promotion – get the word out

Word of mouth or viral marketing. As any advertising executive worth his Gucci loafers will tell you, the best advertisement is a satisfied customer. Happy and achieving children are always a school's greatest marketing asset.

Include parents and pupils, seek their opinions, act on them when practicable, explain why not when you cannot or will not. Get out to the school gate and talk to parents – that way you can address any concerns or simply chat and pass the time of day whilst showing how approachable you are.

The humble newsletter is a traditional but effective way of promoting the school to its parents. Keep them short (a side of A4 once a fortnight is plenty) and friendly. Include good news – sports results, how well behaved the children were on their visit, etc. – and need-to-know information such as dates and events. Make sure you learn how to upload newsletters to your website. Each newsletter reflects your image.

The local newspaper will always be looking for a story – fax them a diary of school events in advance. Get the name of the reporter with the education and community brief and cultivate them. All you need is a newsworthy event which could be anything from a new building, a special theme or charity day or the Summer Fair. Set yourself a target of appearing in a good news story in the press at least once per term or half term.



## 3 Packaging – show your best side

Is your website a window into a wonderful world of learning, or a peep through a crack in the door of dullness? Most prospective parents' first port of call when choosing a school is their website (closely followed by the Ofsted report). Include lots of photographs, video too if you can, children's work and links to other great websites. It doesn't need to be expensive – former pupils doing ICT to GCSE level will manage it. First impressions count. How does your entrance measure up? Which message does it give out? Is your "front of house" person giving the right impression to visitors – efficient, warm, friendly and welcoming? Or is she Eeyore at Pooh Corner Primary?

An Open Day is not a "see the school as we normally function" day. It is a "we're going to show you our bright, shiny, well-prepared selves at our very best" day. So all the displays will be stimulating, the whole place gleamingly and tidy (and potentially recalcitrant pupils sandwiched between two burly TAs in an out of the way part of the building).

## Listen to feedback

### MIX POLICY WITH PRACTICE...

A new head asked the parents what they thought of the school uniform. Parents said they had difficulty getting the specified "mid-grey" trousers for girls. The uniform requirement was changed to "black". So simple. It still looks smart, is easier for harassed and cash-strapped parents to get and the new head immediately had goodwill in the bank. She had effectively marketed herself as a listening and caring head.

## Prospectus dos and don'ts SEND OUT THE RIGHT MESSAGE...

**DONT** include worthy but unnecessary detail. Remember your audience. Parents are, by definition of being parents, tired and worn out (or is that just me?) and will only read something that's pithy and to the point. They are unlikely to alight on your Confidentiality Policy with a cry of "At last! That's just the sort of thing I've been waiting to read!"

**DO** say, "a range of policy documents are available" and from where.

**DONT** have page after page of dull text.

**DO** use bullet points and include lots of photos, preferably in colour, and keep them up to date. You might also give parents a CD of the prospectus and include a link to it on your website.

**DO** choose photographs carefully. Are the children in school uniform? Are you reflecting your ethnic and gender mix? Are all study areas represented and are the most attractive and up to date features of your building included? Are you sure that figure in the background of the photo isn't Ryan duffing up George?