

Andrews University Leadership Program

RECRUITING STRATEGIES FOR ADVENTIST SCHOOLS

A Paper

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## INTRODUCTION

I have been an educator for almost thirty three years. I began my teaching career in a public school system outside of the United States of America, where I taught elementary as well as high school levels for five years. It was not until I came into the private parochial school system that I discovered that one of the primary responsibilities of the principal and an unspoken expectation of teachers, as well, is to increase enrollment and maintain the desired number of students required for the capacity and effective operation of the school. That was truly a rude awakening for me at two levels. In the first place no one prepared me for this role and secondly, my first experience working in the Seventh-day Adventist (Adventist) school system was in the dual capacity as Principal-teacher of a small school, where I was the first teacher and principal. Although I was excited about starting a brand new school, I certainly did not know everything that the job assignment entailed or how some things were to be done. I was hired and came to the job straight out of my undergraduate college experience which was where I received my training and began my journey as a Adventist teacher.

One thing that worked in my favor was that I was as excited about my first assignment as a Christian educator that I was ready and willing to learn. As expected, with the start of any new institution, the word was out; the interest level was high, and people were eager to be part of something new. Among the stakeholders, teamwork was clearly evident. Everyone (pastor and church leaders, church board) in the sponsoring organization spoke proudly about the achievement of this goal.

We started with twenty four students in the lower level of the small church, which had capacity for about fifty students in the designated space. To me that was an unusually small number for a full student-body, having come from previous experiences of school with over 1,500 students. The organizers were ecstatic about the numbers. During my orientation I had heard about schools with less students, so, I was not totally surprised. Needless to say, the administrative duties involved assignments that were over and above what I had seen my principal (supervisor) does in the large public schools in South America.

Duties such as recruiting and marketing came under the principal's portfolio. To say the least, this kind of responsibility made the task seem daunting. Without any training the leader had to come up with strategies for sustaining the school's viability for effective operation as well as increase enrollment. This paper will focus on strategies and best practices (tried and true as well as researched strategies) for recruiting in Adventist schools. However, through out the paper

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there will be frequent reference to marketing, as I have discovered that there is an inseparable correlation between recruitment and marketing in the school setting. First, I will share some of the major reasons for recruiting based on research as well as observation. Next, we will examine from my perspective, what parents and students deem essential when making a decision for the right school choice. Then, I will highlight some critical success factors for effective marketing and recruiting in conjunction with what Adventist schools offer. In addition, the research will present school leaders with pointers for effective ways to market the schools unique qualities and areas of excellence; we will also examine ways a good (comprehensive) marketing and recruiting program can benefit its publics—internal, external, and the entire constituency. I will use the information gathered to explore varied recruiting strategies and develop a model for branding and marketing Adventist schools for successful recruiting. The paper will conclude with a summary which connects the information with a brief global perspective of recruiting and marketing in Adventist schools, even at the higher education level. In the end school leaders will be affirmed to continue customary recruiting and marketing strategies that have worked in their unique situation. However, they are also encouraged to venture out and explore the new ideas in order to create greater success in their efforts to increase enrollment in the Adventist schools, one school at a time.

## **REASONS FOR MARKETING AND RECRUITING**

In this section I will share what I have discovered from personal experience and research are the primary reasons for recruiting in Adventist private schools. My determination has been made based upon the common philosophy and mission of most Adventist schools. First, I must state that during my thirty-year profession as an educator, I have worked in seven Adventist schools in and out of North America, in both capacities of teacher and principal, and because of the similar philosophical and mission focus which each of the schools aim to achieve, I have concluded that an effective recruitment and marketing plan is essential for the growth and identity of these private-independent schools. It is this background that prompts me year after year to sensitize and push my school board and internal audience to prioritize the item of marketing and recruiting. Despite the varied responses of the different school boards (influenced by the different leaders), one thing that remains the same from school to school, is that marketing and recruitment is not an option for these privately operated Christian schools. The bottom line is that if we do not advertise to promote our brand and actively invite, influence, and offer our school as a choice to parents and students, they may choose other schools with which they may be more familiar and lose an opportunity to make a more informed selection.

Invariably, it does not take much discussion to get everyone to agree that there needs to be a recruitment plan to ensure the viability, growth, and sustainability of the respective institution. Consequently, from conference to conference and school to school, I have observed that two major reasons for consistent and continuous promotion include inadequate funding for this purpose and lack of direct, on-going involvement by stakeholders. The following are five essential reasons which I have compiled and in my opinion, capture to the primary reasons for recruiting and marketing in Adventist Schools:

1. Increase enrollment
2. Provide exposure and awareness to the unique perspective of the school
3. Reach beyond the school's constituency as well as the Adventist community to promote the school's strengths, and achievements
4. Provide prospective parents & students with an opportunity to find the ideal 'fit' for their needs
5. Develop and promote the school's brand

## **1. Increase Enrollment**

The Adventist school system has been established from a model of very humble and extremely conservative beginnings. However, contrary to present practices upon which the schools operate, the original guidelines for these schools did not envision large, business type institutions. In fact, these church-run schools were strictly directed to be established for the purpose of evangelism and to ensure the safety of children of the church from the tyranny and terror of the world. (Clear Word, p. 756, Isaiah. 54: 14) According to Ellen G. White, prophetess of the Church, (Review and Herald, July 2, 1908) the following directive was given to establish the first Adventist schools. In all our churches, and where ever there is a company of believers, church-schools should be established; and in these schools there should be teachers with a true missionary spirit, for children to be trained to become missionaries (RH, 07/02/1908, par. 1). The writer reiterates her instruction in this manner, "I say again, establish schools for the children wherever there are churches; where there are those who assemble to worship God, let there be schools for the children. Work as if you were working for your life to save children from being drowned in the polluting, corrupting influences of this life." (RH, par. 2) Then White asserts, therefore in localities where there is a church, a school should be established if there are no more than six children to attend. A teacher should be employed who will educate the children in the truths of the Word of God. (RH, par. 4) The Bible (KJV Isaiah 54:13) substantiates the inspired words, when it states that "All the children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of your children".

Comparing the divine directive with what currently pertains in the establishment and expectation of Adventist Schools, one can obviously identify that there has been a major shift in the paradigm. In the first place Adventist schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century spans the gamut of institutions of learning, ranging from early childhood through to higher education at the university level. The sizes, by enrollment vary from one institution to another. Based on the pattern of Conferences and local churches where I have served, it is my observation that many of the schools are established as a result of varied needs which can be identified by either church leaders or members. Borrowing from the History of Metropolitan Church at my current school assignment in the Allegheny East Conference, I noted that “within a year of the 8<sup>th</sup> Pastor’s arrival the congregation agreed to the establishment of a Christian Adventist School. The congregation’s efforts were encouraged by a wide cross -section of members and by many conference administrators as well as neighboring Adventist Churches. On August 17, 1987 the Metropolitan Adventist Church along with the Emmanuel Brinklow launched the George E. Peters Adventist Elementary School.” (History of Metropolitan Church)

Ever since the establishment of George E. Peters School one of the duties of the principal has been to increase enrollment in order to maintain the financial demands of operating the institution. Whereas, the first school model was based on the generosity and concern of members to save the children, which encouraged all of the church’s children to attend the church school. Nowadays, the reason for establishing schools differ and so church members with school age children attend based on their need and personal interest. Hence, it is no longer an automatic decision that where a church school is established the church members' children will attend. On the contrary, and for this reason, principals and school boards have to develop a deliberate and purposeful marketing and recruitment plan with a specific target audience to attract.

In light of the multiple roles which result in heavy workload that Adventist school principals manage on a day to day basis, it would be more effective if school boards were to share the responsibility for student recruitment especially for elementary and secondary schools . Their efforts as external recruiters or appointing one or more designated recruiters will significantly support the internal initiatives of faculty, staff and students, such as maintaining high expectations for mental, spiritual, social/emotional, and physical achievement and student safety. This collaborative approach in the small school setting is critical for matching output with outcomes. While on the one hand Don Shultz, Professor (Emeritus-in-Service) of Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University, recommends that, “for an integrated marketing effort to be successful, the leader needs to really take charge. On the other hand, he also emphasizes that it can’t be driven from below.” Therefore, he advocates, “Without this support, the initiatives will disintegrate. It must be a university (school)-wide commitment, and it must be clear that the leader and senior team are on board and actively support this initiative.” (Stamats Quick Takes. 2007. Vol. 10)

## **2. Provide exposure and awareness to the unique perspective**

Recruiting students also involves marketing the philosophy and mission of the school to the local and wider communities which the school has potential to serve. That involves promoting the strong and unique academic, spiritual and social programs of the school. This needs to be done as it is also one of the primary methods used by other privately run schools. Adventist schools located in the large city communities must maintain an effective marketing program in order to increase student enrollment particularly at the elementary and secondary levels.

## **3. Reach beyond the school's constituency as well as the Adventist community to promote the school's strengths, and achievements**

Due to the competitive nature of education and educational achievement, schools are challenged to set high expectations for its students to ensure that students attain the established standards of both the counties and/or states where they operate as well as that of the governing organization. In the case of Adventist Schools, they are first accountable to achieving standards set by the North American Division, the governing organization and in addition, schools are also evaluated on their effectiveness in maintaining the expected standards by the local public school system. Principals and school boards have discovered that one way to remain an attractive option for parents and remain the competition is to be deliberate and consistent about promoting the school's strengths and achievements. According to Stamats' *Research on Brand Marketing*, an effective brand marketing strategy cannot be built in isolation." The researchers suggest the one must review and be familiar with the brand of key competitors.

## **4. Provide prospective parents & students with an opportunity to find the ideal 'fit' for their needs**

As a school administrator, I have found that each of the reasons mentioned so far contribute to helping prospective parents make their decision for school choice. Advertising the school's strengths, student achievement, and high school standards provide parents with pertinent information which they can use to compare with other schools that meet their interest.

## **5. Develop and promote the brand**

Ultimately, the primary reason for marketing the school is to promote and attract people to the school's unique qualities--its brand. This requires knowing the competitors and effectively

identifying its distinctive qualities and points of excellence. Stamats Researchers explains that the essence of institution's brand is derived from its key audiences—faculty, staff, and students, adding that, “after all, your brand must blend your core instructional strengths—what you do well—with the key attributes your audiences value—what you want to do well.”

## **WHAT DO PARENTS WANT IN AN ADVENTIST SCHOOLS?**

Historically, many outside of the Adventist community place great value on Adventist Christian education, while among Adventists there is a tendency to undervalue what they have. This observation is based on comments that I have heard from church members. One example to support this statement is the scenario of the Desty and Smith families.

Mr. and Mrs. Desty are a well admired couple among our school family as they are well accomplished professionals and very supportive parents. Mr. Desty is successful business man of Haitian birth while his wife is American and a teacher in one of the public high schools. I first met the couple when Mrs. Desty called and made an appointment come talk with me and visit the school where I was principal. She brought her first born, Seku, at the time he was about 18 months to 2 years old and they were expecting their second child. During the visit, the couple made it clear that they were looking for a Christian School for their son, but would like a school that fit there needs for all of their children. They asked many questions as I gave them a tour of the facility.

The following year, responding to an invitation to our Spring Open House the couple returned and we went through similar routine as we did previously. We did not hear from the family for about a year. Then in September, at the beginning of the new school year, they showed up to register Seku for the First Grade. It was obvious that our school was not her first choice, because we offered a full early development program (for 2.9 to 4years old). She informed me that she started him at a school which was among her choices particularly because of it was closer and provided transportation. But they could not remain there because too many of their other criteria was lacking. Mr. Desty, who spoke very little, shared with me that he only agreed to send his child to the other school to please his wife. He stated that our school was his first choice because he liked the nurturing family atmosphere that he sensed on his first visit. This was the kind of safe, caring and Christian environment that he wanted for his children. His wife agreed, enthusiastically.

Despite institutional transitions and varied challenges over the years, eight years later, I enquired about the Desty family and found out that they are still attending and are strong supporters at Berea Adventist Academy. The couple now has three sons and that is the only elementary school Andrews University, E P Savory, 2008

they have attended. From the beginning, they had expressed that among the things they are looking for to make their decision, include: Christian values, a caring, safe environment and high academic standards.

The Smith Family are members of one of the four Adventist churches which govern our small school. Both parents are Americans and have two children. They are both highly accomplished professionals, Mr. Smith is a medical doctor and is the first elder of the church. Mrs. Smith, a nurse supervisor and also a church leader. It is well known that when it comes to educating their children, two areas that are of high importance to the couple is academic performance-- test scores and sports. The parents have expressed that the church school lacks resources and adequate facilities (computer lab, science lab, no gymnasium) to provide the quality education that they require for their children. Consequently, they have shown no interest (and politely refused) repeated efforts of church and school personnel to make direct contact and have not been impressed by media and word of mouth advertising. Therefore, the children have never attended ours or any of other church school. They attend one of the reputable public schools in the community. In addition, the parents are known, not only for making excuses about their school choice, but they often speak negatively about the church school. Because of the family's influence in the church community, their negative attitude to Christian education has had a damaging impact to the recruitment efforts.

The two scenarios highlight some of the typical criteria which parents want in the elementary school they chose for their children—Christ-centered/Christian atmosphere, safe caring environment, high academic standards, etc. In addition to the obvious, I will share an extended list which I am convinced make up equally important criteria to Adventist parents when they are looking for an Adventist elementary and secondary school for their children. The list includes the following:

- ◆ Quality teachers
- ◆ Safe, nurturing Christian environment- Positive mentor/role models
- ◆ Quality Instruction
  - ◆ High test scores
- ◆ Drug-free environment
- ◆ Order and discipline
- ◆ Diversity in extracurricular and cultural activities
- ◆ Small class size with optimum student-teacher ratio
- ◆ Moderate tuition and fees

In my research I have discovered a strong validation for my observations of what parents want in a Christian school. George H. Akers (2000), in his article, *Seven Reasons I Must Send My Child to Adventist School*, highlights seven reasons that appeal to parents, such as, “Teachers will love my child, Bible is taught there, Students are inducted into the family of God, etc. Kienel A. Paul, Executive Director of Christian Schools International, identifies the same reasons in an article titled, *Reasons to Send Your Child to a Christian School* (Posted on 3. 19. 2003). Among the top ten reasons that Paul suggests why parents chose Christian schools include:

1. Parents’ accountability to God for what their children are taught
2. Better level of instruction
3. The Bible teaching training “up” a child, not point him downward
4. The Christian School is right because standards of morality standards are Bible-based
5. Provides an opportunity for students to witness for Christ
6. Educators teach all subject matter from a Christian context
7. Family is supported as the number one institution of society
8. “The atheists have, for all practical purpose, taken over public education in this country.”  
(Words spoken by prominent public school educator, Dr. W. P. Schofstell)
9. Maintains discipline in the classroom and on the playground
10. Parents belief that children are gifts from the Lord.

### **WHAT STUDENTS WANT IN AN ADVENTIST SCHOOL?**

Being a teacher and administrator, I have discovered that students play a vital role in school their choice as many parents tend to rationalize and in some cases parents even give children (regardless of age) the opportunity to chose. After returning from a long vacation in the Caribbean, Mr. Lewis transferred his children (Danny, a third grader and Keisha a fifth grader) from the Adventist school (where they attended since Kindergarten) to a public school. When I saw the family at church, I greeted them and enquired when will the kids be returning to school. That was when the parents informed me that they were attending a public school. They continued to explain shyly that they asked the children if they want to go public school or back to the Adventist school, and they chose the public school. The parents, who obviously did not have a plan, conceded. The children gave two reasons for their choice of public school. 1. No uniform and 2. A variety of fun extracurricular programs including sports (e.g. basketball, soccer, etc). Clearly, the only Adventist school in town could not compete, seeing that it required a formal (uniform) dress code and did not have any planned sports activity in its regular or extra curricular programs.

The list below includes what the principals and teachers agreed are other criteria that students want to see in the Adventist school they choose

- ◆ Teachers who are fair and supportive -- excellent teaching, fair grading, easy access to teachers
- ◆ Attractive infrastructure- - clean, well-ordered, welcoming environment
- ◆ Safe, caring environment
- ◆ Balanced, rigorous curriculum—academics, including art, music, PE and extracurricular sports activities
- ◆ Discipline, respect, integrity—even though they may resist it they expect an environment that fosters responsible behavior

The principals in my discussion group also agreed that the order of the list identifies the way students, particularly at the middle and high school levels may prioritize what they are looking for in a school.

The presentation identified a new avenue of recruiting which schools cannot afford to ignore in the twenty first century marketing that is the concept of e-recruitment. In a news release by Noel Levitz, a Denver Company, the article pointed out that prospective college bound students are open to cutting-edge recruitment efforts and that they employ the latest social networking technology. The article shared statistics which explained that 43 percent of college-bound students have already created a profile on a college or university site (like those found on My Space) and of those who did not, 46 percent would like to do so. According to Kevin Crockett, (October, 2006) president and CEO of Noel Levitz, the leading higher education consulting firm in North America,

"The 2006 survey reveals that more and more, the Internet is serving as a social network for high school students. More than three-quarters of respondents report accessing the Web using a broadband connection, and that is just the beginning when it comes to Web technology. From blogs to MySpace pages to podcasts, today's college-bound students are using technology to engage in a host of social networking activities that build communities." The article adds that "Having this data provides a more clear indication of students' preferences for electronic communication and e-recruitment."

### **WHAT ADVENTIST SCHOOLS OFFER?**

Adventist Schools share a common philosophical premise world-wide, hence there are many similarities in the operational Model at each of the various levels (elementary to university). The overarching philosophy of Adventist Education emphasizes the following tenets,

Philosophy of Adventist Education: “Seventh-day Adventists believe that true education means more than a pursuing a certain course of study. It has to do with the whole person and with the whole period of existence possible to human beings. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers” (True Education, p. 9)

Based on the philosophy and goals of Adventist Christian education one can unequivocally conclude that Adventist schools offer the following values that are important to most Seventh-day Adventists. Suffice it to say, there are numerous stories which testify that non-Adventist parents seeking similar values and emphasis in education have found Adventist schools (education) the ideal choice for their children, as well. So, among the important offerings of Adventist schools, I have selected the following key components which are applicable at all levels--elementary through University.

First, Adventist education and Adventist schools offer a Holistic approach to education –the education of the head, heart, and hand. According to Knight (2000),

“Excellence in Adventist Christian education represents more than having educational institutions with good reputations, adequate resources, quality graduates, competitive programs, and sound financial operations. It promotes the harmonious development of physical, mental, and spiritual powers, the training of youth to be thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men's thought, and the preparation to be effective citizens on this earth and for rewarding citizenship in the new earth. It also endeavors to restore in man the "image" of God - his Creator (Gen. 1:27), the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Godliness, "godlikeness", is the goal to be reached.” (E G White, Education, 1952, 13-19)

Second, Qualified Adventist Christian teachers, who are viewed as members of the church (in good and regular standing) and who model the Adventist Christian (education) philosophy

Adventist teachers are not only competent in their particular disciplines, but are also committed to Christian values. There are very fine Christian teachers in the public system. But for Adventist educators, commitment to Christ is an essential ingredient.

Third, Adventist schools promote high standards of achievement and deportment. Students are encouraged to put God First and to honor Him in all that they do. Succinctly put, students are required excellence in their work and conduct. This is principle is described this way in the Bible, “Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might. (Ecclesiastes. 9:10, KJV)

Fourth, Adventist education fosters the 3-dimensional partnership of the Home-School-Church.

“Only in a Christian school will children comprehend that they are members of three families—their own clan, their church family and the emerging family of God on earth who will eventually live together in heaven. Learning to respect and cherish each of these families is an important part of Christian education.” (Akers, 2000). Adventist schools foster strong emphasis on life-long values and Christ-centered instruction through the integration of faith and learning based on teachings in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Recognizing that the work of education and redemption are one, parents and teachers collaborate in training the children for citizenship in this world as well as in heaven. (Education. p.30)

In keeping with its foundational beliefs of developing the whole person, mentally, spiritually, socially and physically, Adventist education (Adventist schools) promotes the importance of having a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, for Adventist schools a good marketing tool and attraction to health conscious families is its Drug-free, No Smoking campuses. Another strong recruitment tool is its instruction and practice of the NEWSTART lifestyle which encapsulates the 8 Principles of Health—Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust in God.

### **Quality Instructions & Teacher Accountability**

Adventist schools need to market excellence as a core value and part of the fabric of what gives Adventist Christian education its distinctive quality. The Seventh-day Adventist Organization is best known for its strict belief in the God and teaching of the Bible. There is no doubt that the Bible describes God as a God of excellence. In the creation story repeatedly it is stated in Genesis 1 that God created everything “good.” (Genesis 1: KJV). In his response to the question whether he thought education can be Christian and Excellent, too, former Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell said, “Well, we surely can. In fact, I believe that by definition we can be, more so. The Christian ideals that most of us subscribe to are ideals that subscribe excellence in our lives.” Brantely. (1999)

With this background, Adventist educators seek to model the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ in providing quality instruction which in turn inspires high achievement (excellence) in their students. The quality and credibility of the institution can also be communicated to prospective parents and/or students by being transparent about the expectation for teachers’ consistent practice and accountability. Because every parent comes with a different list of needs, it would be beneficial to share information regarding the on-going training and professional development that Adventist teachers receive which keep them stimulated and rejuvenated to integrate best practices driven by emerging trends. In addition, teachers are also required to maintain acceptable denominational and State Standards.

While I do not think any school will have all that every parent is looking for, my advice to school leaders is to try not to be classified as one of those “Mushroom schools which have a habit of employing half-baked teachers to teach kids—because, if an half-baked principal/leader employs an half-baked teacher to teach pupils, what they will jointly produce will be quarter baked students.” THE PUNCH--Nigeria’s Weekly Newspaper.

At this juncture, I want to submit to you that from my experience and research, that Adventist education and the typical Adventist school has what it takes to attract students (parents) from inside and outside of its circles to its schools. However, because of the competition in surrounding communities-- (other Adventist schools in close proximity, other Christian schools, Private, Magnet & Charter Public schools, etc.) it is imperative that school principals market for effective recruitment. Every Adventist School...principals need to have a strong marketing & recruitment and retention plan.

In this section will identify some critical factors and ways effectively market Adventist Schools for successful recruitment. One may observe that the factors may have positive and negative implications for the public as well as the institution, but they could be effective nonetheless.

### **CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR MARKETING AND RECRUITING FOR ADVENTIST SCHOOLS**

1. Promote the institution’s unique strengths. For instance, that its education (instruction, programs, practices, etc) are based on Biblical principles of truth. Next,
2. Advertise that appropriate Accreditations are in place. Having proper accreditations in place serves to promote the school’s credibility as well as validate the high achievement standards and commitment to excellence
3. Provides educational training at all levels from Nursery to University
4. Maintains consistent achievement –Advertise success stories and achievement statistics of graduates and current students to show consistent track record
5. Textbooks are consistent with Adventist philosophy as well as current trends
6. Promote the component of concern and compassion in fostering the relationship & service oriented emphasis
7. Affordable cost
8. Local economy. This is a critical factor which may have a negative affect on the success of private schools based on the social and economic standard of the community in which the school is located. Irrespective of what the economic status is this is a fact of life which always has to be dealt with. The reality is when the economy is not good

priorities change.

## **HOW SHOULD WE MARKET?**

Knowing the facts, about our school and community or specific constituents, how should Adventist schools market? I would like to suggest four essential marketing principles:

1. The Key--Excellent PUBLIC RELATIONS
  - a. emphasis on Communication and Relationships
  - b. Effective communication (in PR-Marketing) is really very simple. PR is 50% communication and 50% relationship building

According to the Halladay Education Group, (2007) “It’s simply a matter of the right person, communicating the right message, to the right audience, at the right time, and in the right way. But you’ve got to get it right.”

2. Practice a Customer-oriented focus
  - a. Identify target audience -Internal Public (Stakeholders)
  - b. Identify External Publics (prospective parents, students, constituents)
  - c. Prioritize people (Customer is #1)
  - d. Communicate a clear message
  - e. Be friendly, Be polite, Be respectful
  - f. Be attentive to Names
3. Emphasize quality developmental and career programs
  - a. Get constituency/community involvement
4. Know your School
  - a. Educational and Administrative perspective
  - b. Local and national trends that impact your school
  - c. Promote the favorable features of your School (be honest)
  - d. Communicate a consistent message
5. Know your competitors
  - a. Do research (Know their success points, differences & similarities to your school)
  - b. An effective brand for marketing cannot be done in isolation (Stamats Research)
6. Develop marketing strategies that include a global view of Adventist Education
  - a. Promote the worldwide view of educational system (interconnected structure)
  - b. Leverage the opportunities for international collaboration

- c. Leverage opportunities for diversity and enrichment through student and teacher exchange programs
- d. Utilize the Internet to facilitate distance education
- e. Share student success statistics, e.g. 85% complete college education

The essential principle to remember, the experts purport, is that, poor internal marketing can lead to money wasted on misdirected external marketing campaigns, which in turn will impact your enrollment. “You NEVER have a second chance to make a first impression.” (The Halladay Educational Group)

### **BENEFITS OF MARKETING & RECRUITING IN ADVENTIST SCHOOLS**

Among the benefits of a well planned and effectively executed marketing and recruitment program in Adventist schools, are included

A. Exposure of the public to the core of common worldwide Adventist standards and operational procedures that exist. It also publicizes the common educational framework which facilitates leveraging of resources, across cultures, for instance--Teacher exchange and Student exchange, Exchange of educational tools/resources, and helps to provide a constant pool of graduate workers to serve the Church in various capacities

B. Another tremendous benefit is the area of Career options In Adventist Education. This avenue opens up a wide variety of educational opportunities available around the world, as result of growth of the Church. Some emerging trends include: more educational sub-specialties; challenging options in health education worldwide; new opportunities for developing media content for the Web community in different languages and cultures; strong educational needs, in general, in developing countries where Church growth is exploding.

C. The last benefit of school marketing and recruitment that will be cited in this paper is Church Growth and its reciprocal impact on Adventist Education. It should be expected that the growth is fastest in developing countries with limited educational infrastructure schools, libraries, Internet connectivity, and computers. An emerging trend is that the local schools are making provisions to educate more nationals due to the high-cost of studying abroad. This trend requires consistent marketing and recruiting to attract students to explore the local rather than institutions abroad.

## **SHARING SUCCESSFUL RECRUITING STRATEGIES**

- ◆ Communication to internal market (faculty, staff, board, parents, alumni, students)—  
Match your message with the school's mission, vision, & goals
- ◆ Communication to (external market) Direct Mailings - letters, invitations, flyers
- ◆ Home Visitation
- ◆ Community outreach and service-oriented programs (to Adventist & Non-Adventist churches & organizations)
- ◆ Multi-media - telephone, radio, TV, technology (email, website, social networking)
- ◆ Annual Open House—target customers for retention as well as promote academic & extra curricular programs to wider target audience
- ◆ Promote alumni achievement and involvement

## **SHARING SUCCESSFUL RECRUITING RESOURCES**

- ◆ Utilize multimedia: radio, TV, telephone, internet, website--fast, economical worldwide marketing (recruitment)
- ◆ Advertise in Adventist education & other publications
- ◆ Maintain visibility and communication at Adventist institutions—churches, healthcare system, local conference, NAD
- ◆ Advertise & display denominational & national accreditation -- promotes worldwide educational program recognition; strong measure of educational program integrity
- ◆ Network with other professional marketing companies

## **SUMMARY**

In summarizing this paper, I would like to highlight some of the critical factors that are tried and true to marketing and recruiting successfully in Adventist elementary and secondary schools. Being an Adventist educator who has served in different Conferences in and outside of the United States and the North American Division, I speak from experience as well as research, when I encourage school principals and leaders responsible for recruitment and marketing in Adventist schools, to plan carefully and purposefully to reach targeted and achieve targeted goals. Remember the following essentials:

- ◆ Communicate key messages to both internal & external audience

- ◆ Market Adventist unique educational philosophy using various avenues
- ◆ Capitalize on Church growth and the changing educational opportunities and priorities that have been created
- ◆ Leverage the rich diversity in the global Adventist educational system
- ◆ Utilize the Internet/WWW in creating new options for marketing and delivering Adventist education

## **CONCLUSION**

As leaders of Adventist Schools, irrespective of the level, here in the United States, we are faced with the reality of declining enrollment. Perhaps the recruitment program has not been as successful as you would like it to be. I encourage you to reevaluate your strategies and be bold in trying new approaches. The goal of the paper is to affirm customary practices as well as provide new ideas which can be implemented in the school situation to create greater success with efforts to increase enrollment in Adventist schools. I submit that just by being part of the world wide Adventist School System each school and its leaders are strong competitors in the educational arena. Be confident and continuously promote your school as centers of excellence. Promote the special programs offered, student achievement, and positive comments about the operation. Recognize that as a school system, Adventist schools have what both parents and students want in a good school and excellent education. However, it is left to the leaders to create the ideal package (A Brand) just for your institution.

My Formula to help formulate your School Brand:

Core Values + Core Strengths + Attributes Parents & Students Value = School Brand

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