

Include the “ultimate question” in your annual parent survey

Quantifying parent satisfaction in a useful way

“It turned out that a single survey question can, in fact, serve as a useful predictor of growth. But that question isn't about customer satisfaction or even loyalty—at least in so many words. Rather, it's about customers' willingness to recommend a product or service to someone else.”

Fred Reichheld, Author
"The One Number You Need to Grow"
Harvard Business Review

As I will be mentioning at Principals' Council today, you should be asking your parents each year what they think of your school. The "ultimate question," developed and researched across industries by Fred Reichheld, should be included in every survey.

The "ultimate question"

"On a scale of 0 to 10 (0 meaning not at all likely and 10 meaning extremely likely), how likely are you to refer [your school's name] to a friend or colleague?"

Here's how to score it...

1. Count the total number of responses.
2. Count the number of responses that are 9 or 10--your promoters, and determine what percentage of the total responses they represent.
3. Count the number of responses that are 0-6--your detractors, and determine what percentage of the total responses they represent.
4. Subtract the percentage of 0-6 responses from the percentage of 9 or 10 responses. (Ignore the number of responses that are 7 or 8--the passives)
5. The result, called the Net Promoter Score (NPS), has a possible range from -100 to +100.
6. If you have questions, give me a call.

Note: If you use SurveyMonkey for your survey, this question is in their question bank and is automatically scored for you in their reports.

Here's what it means...

Scores in the +50s put you in the same ballpark with Disneyland and Harley Davidson. However, for Christian schools, the 50s simply aren't good enough. (In

fact, a NPS score of 50 puts you in the 43rd percentile of Christian schools.) So 75 or so would be a better goal.

And what should you do next...

Clearly, knowing your school's NPS gives you important information—rather like taking the temperature of a patient. But like a temperature, it tells you if a fever exists but not what is causing it. The rest of your survey needs to ask what parents appreciate about your school and what they wish could be different.

Delegating:

If you are using a self written survey, the person who creates it can add this question. And you can have anyone you trust with the data, score your responses.

Credits:

Fred Reichheld

Binder tab: October or March

I prefer surveying parents near the end of the first quarter—they have had time to develop an opinion and you have time to address concerns you learn about. However, for small schools in particular, an end of the year survey works as well. That way you can plan for changes over the summer. Just make sure you tell parents what you learned from their responses and what you are changing to address their concerns.

School size: All

Marketing process step:

- 1) Who are we?
- 2) What do families want?
- 3) What needs to change?
- 4) How do we tell our community?
- 5) How do we track results?