

Create a warm and inviting school culture

Helping your school sell itself

“Our school sells itself... When I take families on a tour our students are friendly and interested in visitors. Our teachers introduce themselves to students and show interest—they are always open to the interruption of tours in their classroom.”

Karen Kanas, Director of Community Outreach
Lodi Academy

We have talked about this before, but my conversations with growing schools confirms its importance.

A happy culture starts with you

How often do you smile during the day? Make a positive connection with a student? With a student not in your classroom? With a parent? With a whiny parent? With one of your staff members?

A small note on this last item: Matthew Jakobsons and Justine Leonie both talk about the importance of being servant leaders for their staff—doing everything they can for their teachers, so the teachers are freed up to focus on great teaching and great customer service to parents. More on this in another issue...

A happy culture continues with your teachers and staff

When you bring prospective parents through your school this winter and spring, they will need to see and experience a welcoming, fun environment. You can't fake that for them. Your teachers will need to set the tone by having warm, active classrooms doing interesting learning that engages their students.

As in the quote above, your teachers need to ooze welcome when tours come into their classroom. They can't think of tours as interruptions—it will show. I love that Lodi Academy teachers introduce themselves to touring students and families.

A happy culture concludes with students and parents

One Adventist school, not in our conference or union, has a child in each grade assigned as "classroom ambassador." This role rotates each week. They are all trained to do the following when a prospective family tours their classroom:

- Get quietly up from their seat, go to the parents and/or child and introduce themselves,
- Ask for the name of the student,
- Explain what they are working on right then and what learning goal for the day that activity is contributing toward. Now that is impressive for parents looking at your school!

Notice this last part also assumes the teacher has a specific objective for each lesson and a way of communicating that to the class before each lesson. Also impressive.

Tim Kubrock makes a point of asking "promoter" parents to speak at school events whenever he can. They bring credibility, enthusiasm and first-hand parent experience to their messages.

Delegating:

Setting this tone will need to start with you. Sorry, no delegating this week. And if you want to implement the specifics, you will need to dialog with teachers about how it can work at your school so they buy into the ideas.

Credits:

Matthew Jakobsons, Sacramento Adventist Academy
 Karen Kanas, Lodi Academy
 Tim Kubrock, Lodi Academy
 Justine Leoni, Napa Christian Campus of Education
 Melanie Litchfield

Binder tab: Ongoing

Put this in front of the January tab in your binder and behind "Handle leads effectively, part 8."

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?