



SWAN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT Marketing Plan

Why does our school district need a marketing plan?

Historically, we have not viewed marketing our schools as an essential, or even appropriate, function. Yet planned or not, each school presents an image through its most important marketing agents- its staff and students. A marketing plan is simply a coordinated system for sending the messages we want about our school and utilizing those agents to share the best that there is about our schools.

Every day, schools send out hundreds of publicity agents...our students. If staff members recognize the potential of these agents for disseminating information, they soon realize that they can affect the messages students are carrying out of the building, and can design activities that use these skills.

A marketing plan is a systematic way of changing the self-images of staff members to view themselves as agents who carry messages about the school. They transmit these messages in their actions at school with students and adults, and their action in the school community.

This marketing plan is designed to assist the school district in communicating school successes to a diverse public and to help build community involvement, community support and community pride in our schools.

Who will create the marketing plan?

The “marketing team” will include the following members:

- Board of education members from Public Relations Committee
- Superintendent and building administrators
- A minimum of one teacher representative from each building
- Parents and community members
- Students (middle/high/alumni)

I. DEFINE DISTRICT STRENGTHS AND NEEDS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school districts strengths and needs for improvement are both important to the marketing plan.

Strengths are the blocks upon which the school district can build. They will help the team to “sell” the school district.

- a. Competitive and award winning academics and athletic programs (elementary through high school)
- b. Innovative (include examples)

- c. Technology
- d. Availability of extracurricular programs in addition to athletics
- e. Committed district and building leadership working together for the benefit of students
- f. Swan Valley Learning Center
- g. “Family” and Tradition of Excellence
- h. Classroom size

Needs for improvement must be identified so the team can work to minimize their power to generate negative publicity and allow the team to use them as a source of goals for school improvement.

- a. Decrease in enrollment
- b. Standardized test scores (Top 1/3, but strive for improvement)
- c. Marketing ourselves
- d. Budget has jeopardized services (i.e counseling, administration)
- e. Collaboration between buildings and across the district
- f. Preparation for the non-college bound (increased variety of applicable electives)

II. IDENTIFY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT’S MARKET

The team must decide who they want to reach with their marketing plan. There are many groups that have the potential for being a positive force in the operation of the school district, and they are the people the team wants to address. Some examples may include:

- The parents and guardians of students
- Parents of future students
- Citizens in the community; active volunteer organizations
- Leaders in the community

List the specific markets the team would most like to reach:

- a. Families in the Great Lakes Bay Region
- b. Large businesses/employers
- c. Realtors

III. CREATING MESSAGES FOR THE MARKET

a. **Advertising**: This is the purchased message. The team must tell the markets why they should “buy” the “product.” In advertising, the control may be high, but so may the cost. These may include:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Radio | • Bumper Stickers & Window stickers |
| • Billboards | • Brochures |
| • Television | • Direct Mail |
| • Posters | • Fliers |
| • Newspapers | • Calendars |
| • Buttons | • Digital impressions (WWW) |

b. **Promotion**: Promotion is the traded message. The team will sell the school district by using products furnished by a sponsor who is also benefiting from the

promotion. In promotion, the control of the message is still high, but the cost tends to be lower because some is absorbed by the sponsor. It is important, however, that the sponsor can see what the benefit to them is, whether it is increasing their sales, securing a tax deduction, or creating a positive image for themselves in the community.

- c. **Public Relations:** Public relations is the corporate message: a planned effort to influence the market through socially acceptable, responsible performance. Public relations is the reputation the school district builds through its ongoing programs. The cost of public relations is low, but the control of the message sent is also low.

Appendix A lists all of the various marketing messages for the current school year.

IV. DEVELOPING RESOURCES

The team must develop and utilize both financial and human resources in carrying out the marketing plan. This must include an estimated budget of expenses.

Appendix B lists the current budget for marketing expenses.

V. TIMELINE

The committee should meet a minimum of twice per year to consider marketing projects and to review the success of the marketing plan.

VI. EVALUATION

A solid marketing plan must be evaluated annually. The simplest way of completing this evaluation is to analyze what was accomplished in each of the message categories outlined above. A form for completing this evaluation appears as Appendix A.