

RETENTION: The First Step to Growing Your School's Enrollment

Presented to:
Elementary School Principals of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown
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Mike Ziemski, M.Ed. – Regional Vice President, FACTS
& Administrator/SchoolAdvancement.com

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Objectives:

- Systems Thinking
- The DREAM Framework : the 5 Elements of Advancement
- Generational Clusters
- What Customers REALLY Want
- 5 Immediate Strategies Increase Retention

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Systems Thinking

Systems Thinking Insights:

- “Over 90% of all organizational problems are systemic”
 - – Dr. W. Edwards Deming
- “The devil lies in the details, but success lies in the systems.”
 - – The Marriott Corporation
- “To be successful, organizations must embrace personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning and the fusing of the four disciplines by systems thinking.”
 - – Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 1990

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Systems Thinking



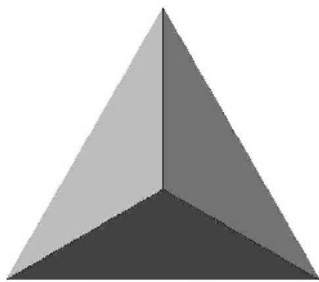
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Systems Thinking is Different

- It's not linear
 - And we like/prefer linear progressions
 - It's how we're taught and how we learn!
- The system must be put in place
 - Must do everything at once
 - Don't think "plan" – think "machine"
- Key phrase to remember – "Everything in Moderation"

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The 3-D Model: A Tetrahedron - How many sides does it have?



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3, 4 and 5

- There are always at least three elements involved in a system...but:
 - Three leads to four (usually connected to one of the 3)
 - Four leads to five (usually hidden or hard to find)
 - Ties the system together
 - When all elements are in place, they may change "positions" of priority with other elements of the system because it's a "living" system.

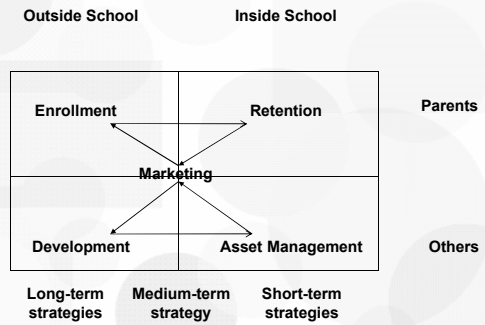
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In Schools

- Fill Every Desk (Enrollment) – Generates Tuition
- Seek Outside Sources for Funds (Development) – Generates Community & Alumni Support
- Use a 21st Century Tuition Strategy (Asset Management) – Captures Tuition and Allocates Financial Aid.
- Marketing (which leads to Enrollment)
- Retention Strategies
 - Different than enrollment strategies, but
 - Schools lump Enrollment and Retention Committees together

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The DREAM Framework



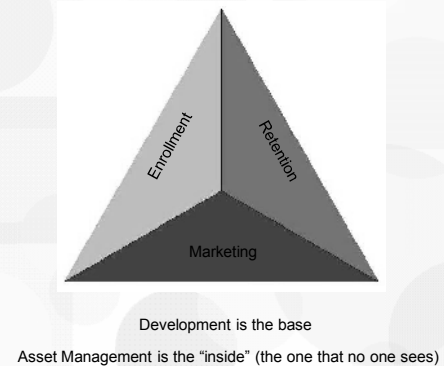
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Schools – Business or Ministry?

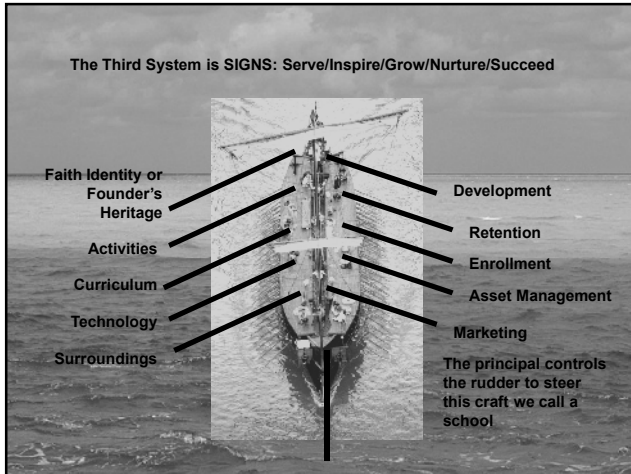
- Can be a ministry, but only if there is no tuition.
- If you charge tuition, you are:
 - A ministry (mission-oriented)
 - A business
 - AND A SCHOOL!!
 - It's not an "either/or" entity...it's not even a "both/and" entity.
 - It's three in one – and each one is a system, with five distinct elements

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Looking Top – Down...



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3 Items to Keep in Mind about Retention

- Teachers aren't just teachers anymore
 - Principals aren't just principals (read, "principal teachers") anymore -They're administrators
 - Survey on educational background
 - Think About This: Are you in Marketing...or are you in Sales...or are you in something else (hint: it's not teaching)?
- What Customers REALLY Want
 - Parents (not students) are your school's customers
 - Children are your school's product
- Who are today's customers (aka, "Your Market")?

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Generational clusters

- iGeneration/Digitals
 - Born 2005 through today
- Millennials/Generation Y/Nexters
 - Born 1985 through 2004
- Generation X
 - Born 1965 through 1984
- Baby Boomers
 - Born 1945 through 1964
- Traditionalists/Builders - Members of "The Great Generation" and "The Silent Generation"
 - Born 1925 through 1944

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The effect in 2011

- Digitals (Digital Natives/iGeneration) are 0 to 6
- Millennials are 7 to 26 → students
- Generation Xers are 27 to 46 → Parents **The ME Generation**
- Baby Boomers are 47 to 66 → School Administrators
- Builders are 67 to 86 → Benefactors
 - Your school's target market: Young women 25-39 years of age.
 - Millennials are more spiritual; more like their "Builder" ancestors
 - The good news: Millennials are now becoming "target" parents!

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The Role of Today's Teacher

- Marketing is education; Enrollment is sales; Retention is service
 - Here's the disconnect:
 - Teachers can educate, but their main role isn't marketing!
 - It's service!
 - The "Servant Leader"
 - Parents are the marketers with Word of Mouth Marketing
 - How many schools have an enrollment director?
 - If you don't, you have no sales department
 - Sales is a process
 - What do customers REALLY want vs. What do customers usually get?
 - Want: Compelling Experience Get: Customer Service

Personal Focus	Product Focus
Reciprocal Loyalty	Endless Prospecting
Differentiation	Sameness
Coordination	Confusion
Innovation	Status Quo

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The Emergent Property: Compelling Experience vs. Customer Service

- True or False: Even in difficult economic times, people will find ways to pay for "Experiences"?
- Why do people take their business elsewhere?
 - Moved 3%
 - Friendships with Other Providers 5%
 - Chose Competition 9%
 - Dissatisfaction 14%
 - Put off by employee's attitude 68%
- 91% of dissatisfied customers will never purchase anything again from the organization that caused them grief.
- Focus on creating "Positive, emotional customer experiences"
 - Logical "facts" lay the groundwork, but don't "sell" the customer.

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Personal Focus vs. Product Focus

- We say we "Focus on the children"
 - Since children are the "product," that's product focus...not PERSONAL focus!
- Parents "buy" the school on what it will do for "them" – not necessarily their children.
 - Is there empathy for the customer? (Homework)
 - Is curriculum delivery appropriate for each student? (Group or Individual Focus)
 - How is technology perceived? (Answering machine)

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Reciprocal Loyalty vs. Endless Prospecting

- The heart of retention efforts
- What attracted parents to your school (its remarkable qualities) in the first place must be taken "to the next level" to keep them there!
 - Create a unique and compelling selling proposition that:
 - Emphasizes school's unique qualities ("Remarkability")
 - Things we think are marketable are expectations
 - Is readily identifiable ("Brand")
 - Demonstrates where you "fit" within the marketplace ("Position")
 - Shows why you are important to your customer's life ("Case")
 - Most reasons we think are important aren't important to parents

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Differentiation vs. Sameness

- If you don't determine a "brand" for your school, you are a commodity
 - With commodities, low price always wins
- Parents want to know what positive experiences are different and unique to being a parent with a child in your school
 - "Me" Generation mindset
 - Constant repetition of identical experiences reduces the "personal" connection
- Dangers:
 - Misunderstanding the "value" perception (low cost = "something's wrong...")
 - Failure to communicate school's uniqueness
 - Creating uniqueness that is easily copied

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Coordination vs. Confusion

- The customer isn't always right (but they're still the customer)
 - Too many choices
 - Promotion vs. practice incongruence (walk the talk)
 - Technology vs. human touch
 - Inability to execute at basic levels
 - Have to be able to do the "basics" before "taking it to the next level"
 - Technical communication presented to a non-technical audience

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Innovation vs. Status Quo

- "Innovation is not the product of logical thought" – Albert Einstein
 - Creativity: Generating a large number of ideas that are forward-thinking, new, fresh, and invigorating
 - Innovation: Whittling them down to those which actually work, can be successfully implemented and be communicated to current customers in an emotionally engaging way.
- This is scary stuff
- Incremental increases on the status quo do not inspire customer loyalty
 - Example: Why are tuition costs increasing?
 - A: Because our costs are rising
 - B: Because we lost 25 students last year and are \$10,000 in uncollected tuition this year
 - C: Because we have an exciting new pilot program where 4th and 5th graders are going to start using the iPad as a part of their daily coursework

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5 Immediate Retention Strategies

The Emergent Property: Build Community

- Give customer encouragement
- Their potential decision to leave puts stress on the rest of the community
- Parents must be **invited** to participate
- This is where FUNDRAISING serves a school
 - Fundraising is not part of your Development/Advancement strategy
 - Fundraising is crisis-oriented ("help" "donate"); Development/Advancement is success-oriented ("invest" "gift" "contribute")

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5 Immediate Retention Strategies

- 1) "Incentive" – NOT "Discount"
 - What companies are giving discounts today?
- 2) Financial Aid vs. Scholarship
 - Need-based aid is important, but remember the "compelling experience"
 - Consider scholarships for full-pay families whose children are doing well
 - Must be a policy decision
- 3) What's Coming Up Next?
 - What's remarkable about your 5th grade program that will keep parents past 2nd grade?

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5 Immediate Retention Strategies

- 4) Invoice/Award Letter Distribution
 - Send invoices home or give them out in person?
 - When was the last time the car dealer sent paperwork to your house?
- 5) Peer Pressure
 - Works with kids – it works with parents too
 - I'm in – RU?

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Suggested Reading:

- "What Customers REALLY Want" by Scott McKain
 - Available on Amazon.com
- "Retention: A Systems Approach to Growing Enrollment" by Mike Ziemski, M.Ed.
 - Available at lulu.com

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Thank You!!

- Questions?
- Mike Ziemski, M.Ed.
 - Regional Vice President, FACTS
 - Administrator, SchoolAdvancement.com
 - www.schooladvancement.com
 - Contact me at mziemski@factsmgt.com
 - Follow me @mikezmed on Twitter.com

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