A Framework for Analyzing Your School’s Enrollment Story

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About ISM

- We were founded in 1975
- We have served more than 8,445 client schools over the past 40 years
- We’re a research firm
- We’re passionate about mission
- We hold students at the center of all decision-making
- We are committed to you
Learning Objectives

◆ Use ISM’s Enrollment Management Framework to analyze your enrollment story

◆ Turn your observations into action: strengthen your position in each sphere of influence (market position, school culture, and constituent relationships)
Key Workshop Outcome

Enrollment Management Plan
ISM’s defines enrollment management as...

a continuous set of recruitment and re-recruitment strategies that enable your school to deepen the relationships it has with its constituents, bonding them ever more deeply and bringing them successively closer to your school’s mission, culture, and values.
Enrollment management, then, is not about what you say; it’s about what you do.
Enrollment Management Framework

{Examine every aspect of your students’ and parents’ experience}
Sphere 1: Market Position

- Price, Product, Process
- Purpose & Outcomes
- Competitive Niche
- Market Demographics
- Influencing the Market
Sphere 1: Market Position

Price, Product, Process

Purpose & Outcomes

Market Position
## Price Product Process Characteristics

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<th>Characteristic</th>
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<th>Process</th>
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## Price Product Process Characteristics

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<td>Outcome Characteristics</td>
<td>Best prepared for values-driven life</td>
<td>Best prepared for next academic level</td>
<td>Best prepared for creating one’s own path</td>
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The Three Levers of Financial Equilibrium

- Compensation
- Hard Income
- Teacher-to-Student Ratio
ACTIVITY:
What Primary Marketplace Stance Are You Communicating?
(partner with another school)
### Price, Product, Process Claims

School Name: ____________________________

Workshop Colleague/Team: ____________________________

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<th>PRICE CLAIMS</th>
<th>PRODUCT CLAIMS</th>
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The Power of Purpose & Outcome Statements
Marketing in Private-Independent Schools is Unique

Your Students Are Your Brand
You aren’t “selling” your school; you’re inviting students into a unique learning experience—and inviting parents into a unique parent peer community.
Marketing in Private-Independent Schools is Unique

To inspire people to act on that invitation to enroll, schools describe how students are positively impacted by their learning experiences in a suite of Purpose and Outcome Statements.
Purpose and Outcomes Statements

{Your Mission, Your Students, Your Faculty}

Mission Statement
Portrait of the Graduate
Characteristics of Professional Excellence

Strategic Plan/Strategic Financial Plan
Implications of Purpose and Outcomes Statements

- **Governance Level**: Mission, primary marketplace stance, and strategic financial planning implications

- **Executive Level**: Hiring, new teacher induction, professional growth culture, and programmatic implications

- **School Culture Level**: CPEs are the operational means of achieving PoG and the foundation of your faculty’s professional growth culture

- **At Point of Origination**: a Cultural Rallying Point—Your Common Purpose
Your Mission Statement

- Should distinguish your school from all others
- Should articulate your “reason for being”
- Should be short enough in length that faculty and students can memorize it
- Should underwrite all decision-making
Criteria

evocative and memorizable, not comprehensive
Why does the Lamplighter School exist?

**Children are not vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lighted.**

*Shared by Jasmine Harris, the Lamplighter School, Dallas, TX*
Mission statement for a music conservatory

“We exist because we cannot imagine a world without music.”
Your Mission
MISSION EXERCISE

WHAT WE DO: Our Actions

FOR WHOM: Our Cause

THE BENEFIT: Our Impact
Portrait of the Graduate: Definition and Samples
The Portrait of a Graduate

◆ Describes the students who graduate from your school, having been transformed by their experiences with you

◆ Ideally not more than three to five statements that describe not only who the students are, but how they will likely be compelled to act in the world as a result of who they have come to be
Your Portrait of the Graduate describes the student who has benefitted fully from your program

Our Graduates are…

- resilient in the face of challenge
- creative in their pursuit of solutions to complex problems
- eager to embrace the next learning opportunity
- inclusive and culturally competent
- able to relax and experience joy
Portrait of the Graduate Sample

Hilltoppers are

◆ Secure in themselves
◆ Disciplined in their thinking
◆ Creative in their collaboration
◆ Compassionate toward others
◆ Dedicated in their efforts
Characteristics of Professional Excellence: Definition and Samples
What are Characteristics of Professional Excellence?

**Operational definition of our faculty “ideal”**

- Focus on behaviors, values, and attitudes that must be present in strength within your faculty for your mission to come alive and the promise of the student you described in the Portrait of a Graduate to be fulfilled.

- The list of 7-10 (or less) descriptors may be both operational and *aspirational*.
Our Teachers...

- challenge students to excel
- create opportunities for learning and growth within and beyond the school day
- celebrate diversity and open-mindedness
- participate fully in the school community inside and outside of the classroom
- employ innovative teaching methods to cultivate the strengths of our students
- pursue professional and personal development throughout their lives
Leading a Purpose and Outcomes Workshop at Your School
Prepare your team for the work

- The work must be endorsed by the Head of School
- Educate your faculty, staff, and administrators about what P&O Statements are and why they matter
- Invite them to participate—share the date, time, and workshop agenda
- Preconfigure your breakout groups with representatives from each constituent group
- Identify a Purpose and Outcome Statement steering committee to finesse the draft statements for final review/affirmation
Start with Portrait of the Graduate
Who are the people you want in the room?

- Full faculty
- Support staff
- Academic leadership team
- Advancement team
- Operational leadership team
- Some of your oldest students (ages 12-17)
In your Portrait of the Graduate breakout groups

- Choose a discussion facilitator
- Choose a time keeper—you have 45 minutes
- Choose a group recorder to capture your statements
- Choose a group spokesperson to report back your group’s final statements to the larger group
- Describe the students who graduate from your school, having been transformed by their experiences with you
- Distill your statements down to the five to seven most meaningful, succinct, and authentic representations of the ____________ School graduate
Activating Questions
{to elicit student descriptors}

◆ What is unique about students at your school?

◆ What are the student behaviors and characteristics that you think are most linked to success later in life?

◆ What aptitudes and attitudes do your students have that make them unique among other students their age?

◆ How are students changed by their experiences at your school?
What do you do next?

- Compile (and save) all statements collected from every group into a shared electronic file

- Prior to the first finessing team meeting, ask individuals to cluster “like” statements

- From those clusters, ask each person to identify key themes

- As a team, agree upon a selection of themes/concepts that are most indicative of your students
What do you do next?

{Distill the collected statements into a draft version of the Portrait of the Graduate}

- Ask your finessing team go back to the original data set, and select the best words and phrases to describe each theme/concept/goal
- Which statement best captures the essence of what you intend?
- Are there words or phrases that you can pull from multiple statement iterations to make each statement better?
What do you do next?

- When you have settled on a final draft, return the Portrait of the Graduate in draft form to the same group who participated in the initial workshop.
- Ask them to affirm the statements.
- If they are not ready to affirm, schedule a third finessing team meeting to explore the specifics of their feedback.
- Return to faculty for affirmation.
- Publish your statements on your website and in your print materials.
- Use them to inform every decision.
Move on to Characteristics of Professional Excellence
Who do you want in the CPE breakout groups

- Full faculty
- Academic leadership team
- Admission, marketing, and development (in a listening capacity)
In your Characteristics of Professional Excellence breakout groups...

- Choose a discussion facilitator
- Choose a time keeper—you have 45 minutes
- Choose a group recorder to capture your statements
- Describe the behaviors, attitudes, and values that must be present in strength among faculty to deliver on the promises made on behalf of students
- Distill your statements down to the 7-10 most meaningful, succinct, and authentic representations of teachers at your school
- Choose a group spokesperson to report back your group’s seven final statements to the larger group
Activating Questions

{To elicit faculty descriptors}

- What characteristics of your faculty attract families to your school?
- What bonds you to one another as a faculty?
- What is unique and exceptional about the teachers at your school?
- What experiences do faculty create for students in your school they are unlikely to experience anywhere?
Finessing Your CPEs and Other Considerations

- Follow the same process as articulated for the PoG
- Once affirmed, ask the same team of faculty/staff + academic leaders to articulate a set of Essential Expectations (EEs) that all teachers are expected to demonstrate (due diligence items)
- Use your CPEs to drive your professional growth culture
- Use for EEs as the foundation for faculty evaluation
- Provide a yearlong mentoring program for teachers who are new to your school, then have them identify growth areas using the CPEs by year two
- Create action plans for teachers who aren’t meeting EEs; if they demonstrate mastery, invite them to return to the creation of growth goals based on your CPEs
Use your suite of Purpose and Outcome statements to drive a culture of professional growth and renewal for faculty

Use your suite of Purpose and Outcome statements as a message framework to cultivate a common word-of-mouth vocabulary

Use those statements to message a clear and compelling school identity
Enrollment Management Framework

{Examine every aspect of your students’ and parents’ experience}
Sphere 2: School Culture

- Mission Delivery
- Student Experience
- Faculty Culture
- Predictability and Support
- Growth Model & Evaluation Process
- Perceived Return on Investment
Predictability and Support

- Positively correlated with student performance, satisfaction, and enthusiasm
- Students need to experience predictability and support from their teachers
- Teachers need to experience predictability and support from their administrators
- When both are present in strength for both groups, a healthy school culture results

[Predictability and Support as a critical variable to student performance, satisfaction, and enthusiasm is derived from ISM’s Student Experience Study]
Predictability and Support for Students

- The rule/reward structure is strong, but intelligible and fair, from the student perspective.

- Faculty’s responses are consistent, fair, and accurate from the student perspective (in regard to what is positively and negatively reinforced).
Predictability and Support for Students

◆ The faculty and administration appears to the students to genuinely desire students’ success and work to elicit that success, while persistently providing accurate—not inflated—reinforcement.
Sphere 3: Constituent Relationships

- Anticipate their Needs
- Mitigate Obstacles
- Take a Personalized Approach
- Share Stories that “Prove It”

Enhanced Relationships
What’s the Goal?

To ensure that your students and families believe they are the most important people at school—that they are, in fact, the reason your school exists.
Put yourself in their shoes

What Do Students and Parents Need and Want?
Anticipate their needs—and meet them!

- Remember when you crawled on the floor to see what your baby could see to mitigate risks?
- Customer service is about anticipating families’ needs, then preemptively seeking to meet them.
- They need us to *connect* with them: powerfully, consistently, and with poise, courtesy, and graciousness.
Anticipate Their Needs

- Start with the major parent outreach touchpoints
- Calendar/advanced notification; back-to-school; new family transitions; parent-teacher-student conferences; report cards/progress reports; and re-enrollment
- Then move on to the more abstract: what does it mean to be educated today?
- How do I prepare my child for an unknown future?
- How do I parent in this era?
In the Academic Realm: Examine Everything

- What do you believe about students?
- What is the net impact of the school’s schedule on students?
- What do you believe about homework?
- Do you believe balance is important? Are you modeling balanced lives?
- Are you making adult-centered decisions or student-centered decisions?
- Program—is your content and approach still relevant?
- Mantra: What is the benefit to students of the action I am about to take, the words I am about to speak, the decision I am about to make?
In the Extracurricular Realm

- Look at the implications of time, schedule, and logistics
- Communicate changes in a timely and efficient manner
- Make sure coaches, especially community coaches (non-staff members), embrace your “why”
- Do your offerings match students' interests?
- Don’t forget to feed and water!
- Persistently think about how students actually experience your programs
Our biggest obstacle is often ourselves

- If you experience the same challenges over and over, you’re probably lacking important processes or protocols

- Shift from “managing/tolerating” to “leading/teaching”

- Stop enabling!

- Examine and refine your parent, student, and faculty handbooks (express an aspirational ideal)

- Plan parent engagement that reflects parents’ needs
In the Realm of the Front Office

- First impressions matter
- Adopt a “what may I do to assist you” attitude
- Own your failures: “I’m so sorry that was your experience”
- Test your phone system
- Create a “response to parents” protocol
- Carefully examine your school’s messaging and key operational functions:
  - faculty/staff directory
  - intuitive web navigation
  - access to tools, apps, portals
In the Leadership Realm

- It all starts with the hiring process

- **Articulate** clear "culture of care” expectations

- Consider it a Characteristic of Professional Excellence

- Inspect what you expect
Strategies for effective parent communication

- Speak conversationally—“you/we”
- Understand less is always more
- Ask yourselves: what can we “say and show” that will make their day?
- Persistently scan your school environment for stories embedded in student work
- Personalize your message for each family
- Make it as easy as possible for teachers
Make it as easy as possible for your teachers

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What can we say and show that will make their day?

The pride of accomplishment.
What can we say or show that will make their day?

The wonder of experiential learning.
What can we say and show that will make their day?

Spontaneous joy.
What can we say and show that will make their day?

What it means to be part of a community.
Activity: Craft a Plan
Any Questions?
Chart your course

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