

Marketing Handbook

for Lutheran Schools



A ministry service of
Lutheran Church Extension Fund



The mission of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund is to support the Church in fulfilling its mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ by being a Christ-centered servant partner of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, ensuring that funds and services are available now and in the future.

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Lutheran Church Extension Fund

10733 Sunset Office Drive, Suite 300

St. Louis, MO 63127-1020

1-800-843-5233

www.lcef.org



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Introduction

The Importance of Marketing

Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing.

— John D. Rockefeller

Recent studies have shown that Christian education is no longer one of the top reasons a parent chooses a school. In fact, it's not even in the top five. Academic excellence, communication, and student/teacher ratio are the most important factors even among parents already in our Lutheran schools.

Achievement testing shows our LCMS schools typically rank above public schools, offering academic excellence. We traditionally offer smaller class sizes and excellent communication between teachers and parents. Our caring Christian environment combined with academic excellence is exactly what parents say they are looking for.

However, overall LCMS school enrollment is declining. Why? To answer that question you need to start by looking around you.

We live in a marketing-saturated environment. If you don't market, you get lost or forgotten. Many schools we encounter take pride in the fact that they are the "best kept secret" in town. But that is no longer a good thing. The Lord blesses our schools and teachers with the opportunity to share Christ's love with the world around us, but keeping that love a secret is not His plan.

We are facing greater competition than ever before: charter schools, parochial schools, magnet, and Internet schools...the list goes on. We have to prove the value of our schools. Whether you want to admit it or not, we are selling a "product": an excellent Christian education.

This handbook will walk you through the basic steps for developing an effective marketing plan for your school. It outlines some of the basic guidelines your school can follow as you begin the daunting task of affecting public perception and awareness.

It is important to know that marketing on its own cannot turn around a struggling school if there are larger internal problems that need to be addressed. Administration and marketing must work hand-in-hand to address the issues uncovered through the research process. Additionally, it

takes the combined effort of marketing and “customer service” to see the best results—effective marketing cannot happen without the complete support and cooperative effort of the entire administration, staff, board, and congregation.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund provides a large array of services to support your pursuit of the Great Commission. For additional information, please visit www.lcef.org.

The Situation Analysis

Understanding the Product/Market Relationship

Authentic marketing is not the art of selling what you make but knowing what to make. It is the art of identifying and understanding customer needs and creating solutions that deliver satisfaction to the customers, profits to the producers and benefits for the stakeholders.

— Philip Kotler

The most effective marketing is built on a good understanding of the relationship between your “product” and the market. You gain that understanding by conducting good research.

Moving a marketing effort forward without research is like throwing darts (money!) at a target while blindfolded—maybe you’ll hit your target, but more likely not. Conducting adequate research not only helps you see your target, but also helps you build your dart (message) so that it’s more likely to hit where you aim. Basing your marketing strategy on solid research will make your school a good steward of the financial resources the Lord has given you.

The Situation Analysis is one of the most vital, yet most often overlooked, elements to any successful marketing campaign. It alerts you to any perception or awareness issues that exist, and often informs you of any legitimate issues you need to address internally.

It will answer questions such as:

- Do you have a product that people want?
- What is the image/perception of your school among the community?
- Are your customers satisfied?
- Can you compete?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you have a product that is marketable?
- Can your community afford you?
- Are you targeting the appropriate households?

We highly recommend that schools spend the time and money to determine how the community views the school, how parents and staff view the school,

how the school compares to the local school district(s), as well as neighboring private and parochial schools. A comprehensive Situation Analysis will provide a crystal clear direction for your marketing campaign and will help maximize your marketing dollars.

The key components of a Situation Analysis are demographic research, competitive analysis, and product evaluation.

Demographic Research

Where do our customers come from? What are they looking for? What are their lifestyle habits? Can they afford a private school? How might expected trends in our community impact our customers?

You must know your potential families as well as your current families to develop an effective marketing plan. Leaders who assume they know their customers typically make incorrect assumptions, focus on the wrong programs, price themselves too high (or too low!), and prepare the wrong messages. These decisions can make marketing efforts ineffective.

Demographic research provides you an in-depth picture of your community, including their income level, age make-up and values. This is an important way to discover the best way to reach your community.

Your LCMS district office may have resources that help you research basic information about your community. More detailed information can also be attained through a comprehensive demographic research package from Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF). LCEF's **"In Our Community"** demographic study provides your school with a comprehensive look at your surrounding community, helping you:

- Understand the issues facing people within reach of your school.
- Find out what does and doesn't work to get their attention.
- Know expected population trends and how these could impact your own membership trends.
- Uncover student needs that aren't being met.
- Define the mission field that is within your reach!

We recommend purchasing the full report. For more information, visit www.lcef.org/services/demographics or contact your LCEF District Vice President.

Competitive Analysis

To best evaluate your situation, you must understand your competition. What are they offering that you are not? What customer need are they failing to meet? What are their plans for new programs or facilities?

The easiest way to learn these answers is to become a secret shopper. (Secret shoppers are people retailers pay to shop in their stores and complete surveys about customer service.) Become a secret shopper in your own community and visit other schools in your area.

Visit the neighboring public, private, and parochial schools to get information and a first impression of how those schools compare with yours. Take time to compare the academic curriculum (particularly vital in marketing your school), the facilities, and the programs. Consider their locations (visibility and access) in the community. Make a list of the strengths and weaknesses of each and the perceived value vs. price.

Product Evaluation

Product evaluation is how you determine key information about your school. This element is similar to the competitive analysis, but sometimes more difficult to achieve because of the difficulty we have of taking an objective look at our own situation.

Perhaps you could enlist a volunteer (or even hire) a secret shopper to survey your own school and see how it rates compared to competitors.

Other good sources are graduates, former and current parents, and former and current staff. At the very least, conduct a survey of all the current parents and staff. A comprehensive and well-organized survey will determine what your current customers perceive to be your strengths and weaknesses and will offer you a clear understanding of the perception that exists.

What are your customers' hot-button issues? You will find answers to your questions such as:

- Why do parents choose a school?
- Are there quality issues?
- Is the tuition too high?
- Are you offering the programs parents want and need for their children?
- Are there problems with the teachers or administration?

You must consider the results of your survey before embarking on an external marketing effort.

- IF you have a serious internal problem, STOP! You are not ready for a marketing campaign.
- IF you discover there are problems with the *quality* of your programs, STOP! You are not ready for a marketing campaign.

Keeping in mind that it is the responsibility of the school board and school administration to determine what the real issues are and what are simply

communication problems, make sure to address any issues that exist internally before or in conjunction with a marketing effort. Don't make the mistake schools sometimes do—dismissing negative parent feedback as a simple misunderstanding of your school. Marketing without fixing the problems will only create more dissatisfied customers and generate more negative word of mouth.

Analysis Summary

By putting all this information together, you should have a comprehensive picture of your strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, and will know what message you need to communicate in your marketing campaign to reach the customers you want to target.

The Marketing Plan

Based on the research uncovered in your Situation Analysis, you should now know your competitive advantages, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. The next step is to develop your marketing plan.

What is a Marketing Plan?

Depending on a person’s familiarity with developing business strategies, the term “marketing plan” can be interpreted many different ways. For some, it simply means, “What advertising and promotion we will do.” For others, it’s as complex as “When, where, how, and to whom we will, price, brand, distribute, promote, advertise, and talk about a specific product to maximize sales within our competitive environment.”

The easiest way to think of what’s involved in a marketing plan is to think of what’s frequently referred to by marketing experts as the “Four Ps”—Product, Place, Promotion, and Price.

A handbook such as this is not the place to explore each of these in detail; the purpose of this handbook is to focus on the “Promotion” piece of the marketing plan. School administrators and school boards, entrusted with the responsibility of managing site, facility, tuition, programs, and policy, are best positioned to determine “Product,” “Place,” and “Price” in light of the situational analysis results. However, a brief introduction to how each fits into the overall plan for your school is appropriate.

The “Product” for our discussion here is “education” and every objective attribute or feature that defines the education *your school* offers. These include:

- Features of your site and facilities (classrooms, labs, playgrounds, gymnasium, library, cafeteria, ball fields, etc.); and
- Features of your program (Lutheran/Christian, extracurricular activities, special needs resources, teacher/student ratios, classroom resources, etc).

Now we understand that the most important thing we do is market the product. We've come around to saying that Nike is a marketing-oriented company, and the product is our most important marketing tool.

— Phil Knight, CEO Nike

(Note that terms like “exceptional,” “well-rounded,” “state-of -the-art,” or similar value-laden terms are not part of the product definition—such terms would fall under “Promotion,” which is how we communicate our product’s features to our target market.)

The “Place” is your school’s location in your community in relation to the likely users (proximity, accessibility, surrounding environment). (*Where* your school is located is “Place”; *what’s provided* at that location is “Product.”)

“Promotion” (used in a wider sense) is your marketing *communication* plan—*every* tool you use to communicate information about your school in order to retain current students and attract new ones. (“Promotion” is also used in a narrow sense to refer to the use of events, sponsorships, and giveaway items to get your brand or product in front of potential customers.)

“Price” is how you structure tuition and fees to maximize “sales”—reach the most number of students possible with your ministry—and remain financially secure.

From here on, this handbook will focus on “Promotion,” i.e., the *marketing communication plan*.

The Marketing Communication Plan

Organize a Marketing Committee

Campaigns should have the same tonality, the same creative direction, and, more importantly, the same strategic direction.

— *Jerry Reitman, Executive Vice President (retired) The Leo Burnett Company*

A strong marketing communication plan is one that integrates a variety of communication strategies, combining them to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact. This can require a lot of time. Whether you're working with a marketing professional or doing it yourselves, the more of the responsibility you can share, the faster you can accomplish your goals. Begin by putting together a marketing committee to share the responsibility.

Most schools would be surprised to realize the talent of parents who are already part of their school community. Identify and utilize these talents and resources and put together a committee with diverse skills:

- **Event Planner:** to organize Open House events.
- **Copy writer:** to write copy for brochures and informational folders.
- **Marketing/Sales:** to make recruitment visits with displays at area churches, preschools, and feeder schools.
- **Public Relations:** to write articles for publication in the local media.
- **eMarketing Expert:** to develop a strong Internet presence.

(If you have a development director on staff, this person **MUST** be involved as well.) This committee should meet regularly to stay on track and must be a **WORKING** committee, with each individual assigned a task to complete before the next meeting. Additionally, there should be one person clearly in charge of keeping the committee on track and communicating with the administration and/or school board.

Know the Facts—and Which Ones to Highlight

What are you selling? How is it different from what other schools are selling?

The parents of today have been “marketed to” their entire lives, and sadly most of them will tell you they rarely got what they paid for. This generation wants proof of product quality before purchasing.

Too often our schools fill pages of brochures with fancy words and pretty phrases. But more important to parents are the facts. And not just any facts—you need to highlight the ones that *set you apart* from the competition *and* that *parents/students value*.

For example, if academic achievement is what sets you apart *and* what parents value most, statistics reflecting your success in that area should dominate the message (fill in the blanks with your accurate numbers):

- *Our students score in the top ___% of the country in reading and math.*
- *Our school scores in the top ___% of the country on National Achievement Tests.*
- *Consistently score ___ points above state norms on ACTs.*
- *___% of our students continue on to college.*
- *Over ___% of our students participate in extracurricular activities.*
- *100% of parents appreciate our Christian, caring environment.*

If academic achievement is what parents value most, but *not* what sets you apart, select *another* attribute parents value and make *it* the differentiating value (without neglecting achievement). For example:

- *Most affordable private education in (community)*
- *SMARTboard technology in every classroom*
- *Career mentoring for upper grade students*
- *100% of parents appreciate our Christian, caring environment.*
- *Over ___% of our students participate in extracurricular activities.*
- *95% of our students continue on to college.*

Bullet points and statistics will stand out on marketing materials, emphasizing the core message and proving the value to parents. These are undisputable facts, easily documented, and reassuring to parents.

Simple rule of thumb: if it takes more than 30 seconds to explain, it's not a good fact.

Developing the Brand

Creating a quality, recognizable brand image for your school can be very costly. However, your marketing must live up to your claims. If you promote yourselves as an academically superior school, then your marketing must appear superior as well. If you are promoting your quality education,

The image and the brand: it is the total personality of a brand rather than any trivial product difference which decides the ultimate position in the market.

— David Ogilvy

then your marketing materials must be quality as well. First impressions are difficult to change.

LCEF has developed four LCMS school branding campaigns to help our Lutheran schools upgrade their brand image through marketing and sales materials. See “LCEF Marketing Resources” for more information.

The Elements of Marketing Communication

Advertising

You can say the right thing about a product and nobody will listen. You've got to say it in a way that people will feel it in their gut. Because if they don't feel it, nothing will happen.

— William Bernbach

Advertising can be an effective marketing tool, however each community is different and you must track the effectiveness of each advertising tool used in order to determine whether it is worth the money.

Internet

For the current generation of parents, the Internet is the most important advertising tool you have at your disposal. This has become the primary way to search for products and services; your Web site may be their initial introduction to your school. It could be your first and only chance to make a good, first impression. Therefore, you must have a Web site that is a quality representation of your

school. Appearance, ease of use, and access to information are all keys to making a successful Web site.

- Make it easy to access information about your programs and opportunities for students.
- Make it easy for parents to contact teachers and administrators.
- Provide parents online access to their children's progress.
- Coordinate with extracurricular groups to get their information and activity schedules posted.
- Keep information current. Neglecting to maintain your site may give the impression that you lack staff and/or resources.

Letting prospective parents access information they need now and see how easy it is to access information they will want later will build their trust in your school.

Making the look and feel of your Web site reflect the personality (image) you want to communicate is also very important. It should coordinate with the image you project in your other communication tools.

Advertising on Web sites geared toward your audience can also make a strong impression.

Billboards

It is widely accepted that the average person has to see something seven times before they will remember it. That requires a lot of advertising! However, most people drive the same route to and from work every day, making billboards a quick and effective way to make seven impressions. Whether they are large billboards along the interstate, or bus transit billboards along the main roads, this is a great way to generate awareness for your school. Variations on the billboard theme include yard signs and car bumper stickers or car magnets you provide parents of current students.

Direct Mail

One of the most effective marketing tools yet today, direct mail allows you to get very targeted with your mailing. This advertising tool is a bit more expensive, but typically has the best response rate. (Response rates depend on so many factors, they are difficult to predict. Yours could range anywhere between 0.25% and 0.75% and be considered successful.)

LCEF offer a mailing list service called, “Neighbor to Neighbor.” With Neighbor to Neighbor, you can narrow down a mailing list based on income and/or age of children in the home. You can even select a list based on lifestyle segment, selecting those households most likely to be open to a Christian school. More information is included in the “LCEF Marketing Resources” section of this handbook. You can also find more information by visiting www.lcef.org/services/demographics.

Newspaper

While the effectiveness of newspaper advertising is decreasing, in certain markets it is still a valuable marketing resource. The price is generally reasonable. Keep in mind that newspapers don't discriminate based on demographics, income, or whether there are children in the home. Therefore you will have a larger number of people who see your ads, but aren't members of your target market.

Radio

Radio can be effective advertising support. It is best used in conjunction with another marketing tool. The price is inexpensive, but it is not a good standalone tool.

Television

This broadcast medium is still very important because it uses two senses, sight and sound, making a more lasting impression. Additionally, television is becoming more affordable with cable stations making it possible to

advertise on specific channels in targeted districts. However creating a television commercial that reflects the quality of your school requires some extra money and a professional TV producer. You can also sponsor local news, sports programs, and children's channels.

Public Relations

“Free” is a word that schools would like to hear more often. Well, public relations is FREE advertising! Send out press releases monthly to your local media about your test scores, student events, and success stories. Include photos and captions, facts and statistics to back up the story, and quotes from experts on your staff. The more work you do for the media, the more likely your story will be used by the media.

Create a 12-month plan with story ideas to write for each month. Tie the stories into current events, holidays, and community awareness programs—this increases the likelihood of your story receiving coverage. Develop a relationship with the local media and look for opportunities to get your school recognized.

Get involved in the community—Habitat for Humanity, health fairs, neighborhood events—and make sure volunteers wear school T-shirts and apparel to increase awareness of the school.

Recruitment/Promotions

Get out of your building! That's right...get out!

Contact area churches and preschools and schedule visits to promote your school. We recommend putting together an impressive display, including marketing brochures and admissions folders to hand out to interested families. Send your most outgoing sales person and make sure they are armed with statistics and facts to highlight how great your school is.

The best months to be promoting your school are December through April. Preschools can be marketed all summer long.

Make sure to have some giveaway items with your school name and contact information, such as rulers, pens, mechanical pencils, mouse pads, magnets, etc. Choose items that will be used regularly so your name stays in front of your prospective customers.

Open House Events

Open House events are a great way to show off your staff and facilities. Market your Open House through advertising, direct mail, bulletin announcements, and banners.

Draw attention to your school on the day of the event with balloons or banners along busy streets.

As prospective families walk into the building, invite them to fill out an information form that gives the name, address, phone, e-mail, student's grade, and "How did you hear about us?" This information is important to ensure quality customer service and to track the effectiveness of your marketing tools.

After the forms are completed, have a volunteer greeter/tour guide escort visitors around the facility and introduce them to the appropriate classroom teacher(s). Guides should stay with their visitor the entire time if possible.

When the Open House ends, copies of the information forms should be provided to the teachers who spoke with each family. The teachers should write thank-you notes to each family and provide their business cards in case additional questions come up.

Customer Service/Admissions

The recruitment and marketing process doesn't stop when someone calls the school or visits an Open House. You need to follow up.

1. Immediately after someone calls for information, have an admissions folder mailed to their home.
2. Follow up with the family within a month after mailing the folder or seeing them at an Open House to gauge their interest and offer additional information. Have a volunteer team of parents make these calls so they can talk as happy customers and share their positive experiences. Or, the principal can make the phone calls to answer any additional questions the families may have.
3. Keep notes on the information forms so you know when they have been called and their status. Are they currently enrolled? Are they a definite no? Are they awaiting word on financial aid?
4. Keep a list of issues discovered in the follow-up contacts and forward to school administrators.
5. You may want to consider a dedicated telephone/cell phone number for inquiries and admission information. Making a single person responsible for this area will reduce the potential for lost messages and will enhance customer service.

For re-enrolling families, make sure to follow up with any family that doesn't re-enroll during closed/pre-enrollment. The school board or principal should

talk to each family, giving them an opportunity to share any concerns that are causing them to delay.

Internal Marketing

Don't only market to the outside community. The quality of your image must be equally cared for internally. Marketing yourselves with flashy materials, only to have prospective parents arrive at your school and be handed poorly copied information on green paper or yellow paper will negate any positive impression you made with your external marketing. The image must be consistent both externally and internally.

Additionally, parents need to be reassured of your quality and need to be "resold" year to year so they re-enroll. The best results come from a combined marketing and customer service approach. So don't forget to care for those already in your building!

- Utilize school newsletters to offer "Did You Know?" statistics for each grade.
- Upgrade your newsletters to reflect your brand image using stationery templates to improve the quality.
- During parent-teacher conferences, have teachers in pre-K hand out fliers filled with impressive statistics about Kindergarten, a biography of the teacher, and a list of the curriculum.
- Hang posters on the walls stating facts about the school. The more facts your current parents have, the better they can sell your school to friends and family. Word of mouth is always the best form of advertising.
- Hang banners to improve the look of your school and draw attention from busy streets.
- Make sure to offer the same quality re-enrollment packets to current families as you do new admissions packets for prospective families.
- Have teachers and administrators send notes home regularly to parents acknowledging excellent work by the students and recognizing individual achievements.

Marketing is not an event, but a process. . . It has a beginning, a middle, but never an end, for it is a process. You improve it, perfect it, change it, even pause it. But you never stop it completely.

— Jay Conrad Levinson

- Offer referral discounts to families and promote the program through internal marketing.
- Thank parents in a variety of ways—verbally, in newsletters and notes—for entrusting their children’s education to you.

Put the same effort into courting your current parents that you will put into attracting new parents. Make sure your current customers are happy before you bring in new ones! Retention is the key to growing any school program.

Tracking the Effectiveness of Marketing

Tracking is the evaluation tool for marketing—and the forgotten piece of many marketing plans. Even schools that have the best marketing campaigns tend to forget this all-important step.

So how do you track your marketing? The answer is simpler than you think.

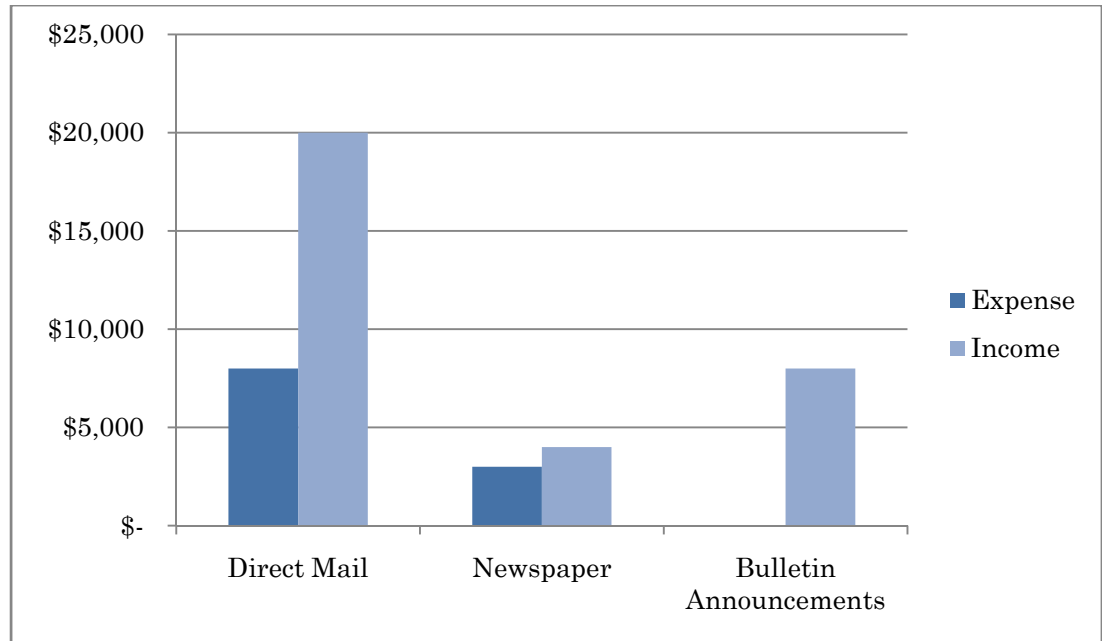
On the information forms that are completed during open house events and when people call for information on the school, include a section that asks, “How did you hear about us?” Offer them answering options that reflect the marketing tools you use (e.g., “Direct Mail,” “Radio,” “Sign in Neighbor’s Yard,” “Church Bulletin,” “Internet,” “Student/Family/Alumni Referral,” etc.)

Quarterly, someone should evaluate this information, looking to see what marketing tool brought in the most interest, and what marketing tool brought in the most students who ENROLLED. Multiply the number of enrolled students times the annual tuition and compare to the expense of the program.

Here is an example:

Our sample school spent \$8,000 on direct mail (printing and postage expenses) and they enrolled five students who called or visited the school after seeing the direct-mail piece. Annual enrollment is \$4,000 per year, giving the school new income of \$20,000. Additionally, the school spent \$3,000 on newspaper advertising and enrolled one student. The bulletin announcements, which were free, brought in two students who visited after seeing the announcement in their church bulletin.

This is what that tracking looks like:



Based on this information, while direct mail was more expensive, the profit over one year was well worth the investment. Consider that profit times the number of years recruited students may be at their school! Additionally, the bulletin announcements, which were sent to 45 churches in the neighboring area (all denominations), also proved to be a cost-effective form of advertising. If marketing budget cuts were necessary, newspaper would be the first of these three marketing tools to discontinue, based on the rate of return.

Corporations all over America require this tracking from their executives. It is not a new concept for professionals, but it is new to the church and school world. Marketing professionals must prove their value every day, and we must start expecting the same from our schools. It's about being good stewards with the money we are given.

If we are given a \$5,000 donation for marketing, where do we spend it? Look at the tracking results, and the answer becomes clearer. That is why we track. Is the marketing worth the effort? Again, tracking statistics gives us the answer.

LCEF Marketing Resources

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) has developed *LCEF Marketing Resources*—direct-marketing campaigns to help your Lutheran school upgrade its brand image.

For a fraction of the cost of developing a fully customized, marketing communication strategy, you can order a complete marketing campaign to promote your school. For example: a custom information/application folder would cost approximately \$2.25 if designed and printed individually for a single school. The high-quality folders LCEF offers cost just 75 cents— an amazing savings!

The cost savings are made possible because the marketing materials are mass-printed ahead of time to benefit from quantities of scale. In the printing industry, the more you print at one time, the less expensive each piece becomes. These marketing items are now in inventory awaiting your customization.

Each campaign provides marketing tools for three different school-age groups—preschool, elementary, and high school. Choose the one that best fits your school and target market.

- Do you need to promote academic excellence more strongly in your community? There are two campaigns from which to choose: *Believe in Excellence* and *Reaching Higher*.
- Do you need to promote Christian values and a well-rounded, quality education? Select *Beyond Belief*.
- Is your community traditional and your niche a strong Christian belief? Choose *We Believe*.

To check out the *LCEF Marketing Resources* materials available to you, simply visit the Web site at www.lcefmarketing.com.

How to Use LCEFMarketing.com

When you arrive at the *LCEF Marketing Resources* Web site, you will see the following message:

Welcome to the LCEF Marketing Resources Web site.

Marketing effectively in today's society is necessary for survival. But where do you start?

This program was developed by LCEF to help our LCMS schools upgrade their brand image through marketing and sales materials. For a fraction of the cost of a customized campaign, you can order complete marketing campaigns to promote your school.

If this is your first time visiting our site, feel free to roam the site and look at the various branding campaigns available to you. Each campaign provides a variety of marketing tools for three different school age groups—preschool, elementary, and high school. Take your pick and upgrade your quality image to the community!

STEP 1: SIGN IN

Click on the “Login Now” button to view the log-in page.

New Customers

If you are a new customer, click on the button to “Sign Up.” Complete the form, providing all information requested.

The service has been developed for LCMS-affiliated schools. After you sign up, your account will be approved within 24 hours (upon verification of your eligibility to participate), and you can begin ordering online immediately.

Returning Customers

If you are a returning customer, log in by typing in the e-mail address and password you selected when you registered. If you do not remember your password, click on the words “*Forgot Your Password?*” Type in your e-mail address and click the “Submit” button.

STEP 2: SELECT YOUR CAMPAIGN

After you log in, select your favorite campaign. **NOTE:** Once you’ve decided on a campaign *and place an order* (sample campaign packets excluded), your school will be locked into that campaign. This is to help ensure that each school is using the branding tools appropriately. Materials from one campaign cannot be combined with another; the campaign message needs to remain consistent throughout every marketing tool.

STEP 3: PLACE YOUR ORDERS

Click on the age group that is appropriate. Then scan through the three pages of marketing material choices.

To Place an Order:

The process is very similar to other “order online” Web sites. Simply select the quantity and click on the “Add to Cart” button. This will put your item in your Shopping Cart. Your Shopping Cart is viewable on the right-hand side of the Web page.

If at any time you would like to see your Shopping Cart details, simply click on the shopping cart icon on the right-hand side of the page.

When you are checking out, make sure the mailing address and billing address are correct. You will be INVOICED for your order, no credit card is necessary.

If the items you order require personalization, you will receive an e-mail from the *LCEF Marketing Resources* design department requesting copy and design approval. **Note:** If you do not see this e-mail right away, please check your SPAM folder.

LCEF will invoice you AFTER you have received your order.

What Items Are Available?

Sample Packets of Each Campaign

You can order a sample packet of each campaign's materials. Sample packets are available for each of school category (pre-K, elementary, and high school.) Each sample packet contains most of the items listed below.

Pocket Folders

To present a strong first impression, upgrade your image with branding folders. Folders can be used to mail detailed information to interested parents. They can be used for re-enrollment packets and sales promotion materials.

This folder has dual pockets, with a business card slit on the left pocket, and a brochure/DVD slit on the right pocket. Matching stepped-inserts are available to help organize your school's information in a user-friendly format.

Pocket Folder Stepped Inserts

These stepped inserts complete the sales folder, organizing pertinent information in a user-friendly and professional format. There are four inserts per pocket for a total of eight inserts. Inserts come ready to print on your laser printer or copier, and come 250 per packet.

You can order the entire set of eight inserts (250 *sets* in a packet), or each insert individually (250 *inserts* in a packet).

Stationery

Use the stationery for your daily classroom news, for letters to prospective parents and current parents, or for press releases. It will ensure your branding message is reinforced in all your communication.

Single sheets of stationery are professional and high-quality pieces ready use in your own printers for your daily news or as general stationery by teachers and administrators.

Newsletter Base

Make sure the message you distribute internally is as nice as the message you use externally. Newsletter templates allow you to reinforce your brand image so your current customers enjoy the same quality product as your prospective customers. These newsletter templates can be used for school newsletters, event programs or worship bulletins.

The templates are professional, high-quality, preprinted 11- by 17-inches, and ready for you to use for with your weekly or monthly school news.

Note Card with Envelope

Taking care of your current parents is very important for any school program to ensure you have happy customers. Additionally, a personal note to prospective families can be a unique, personal touch that helps you stand above most other schools. One way to do this is through individualized, handwritten notes sent home to current families and prospective parents.

Note cards carry the brand message while leaving the inside blank for personal messages. Each package of note cards also comes with a package of blank envelopes.

Postcards

Direct-mail marketing is an effective way to communicate directly to your key audience. “Neighbor to Neighbor” mailing lists purchased through LCEF can target homes which meet specific criteria. For example, you could target families open to Christian mailings, with an income over \$75,000, and likely to have children between the ages of 3 to 10. This gives your marketing efforts a higher level of effectiveness because it places your postcard advertisement directly into the hands of your target market.

We recommend three postcards per year. Therefore, there are three postcards from which to choose. The best times to send direct mail postcards are January, March, and April for elementary and high school. July is an effective time to reach preschool families.

These large 5.5- by 11-inch postcards provide standard text on the reverse side and have space for personalized information about your school. Include bullet points of facts and statistics, a map to show parents exactly where the school is located, along with your phone number, e-mail address, and website. Your logo could also be included.

Mailing Options for Postcards

We offer three options for executing a direct-mail campaign: Conducting the mailing yourself with your own list, conducting the mailing yourself with a “Neighbor to Neighbor” mailing list you purchase from LCEF, and LCEF conducting the mailing using a “Neighbor to Neighbor” mailing list you purchase. (Mailing lists are invoiced separately; postage will be added to your material invoice as appropriate).

- *Mailing Postcards Yourself*

If you are mailing the postcards yourself, simply order the quantity of cards you need for the mailing.

- *Mailing Postcards Yourself with List Purchased from LCEF*

If you would like to do the mailing yourself, but need LCEF to provide the mailing list, then don’t place your postcard order at this time. Instead, wait until you receive your mailing list from LCEF and return to the *LCEF Marketing Resources* Web site once you know the correct number of postcards to order.

- *LCEF Providing the List and Mailing the Postcards*

If you choose to have LCEF provide the mailing list and mail your postcards, please order a quantity of one postcard. The actual number of postcards printed and mailed will be determined by the *number of addresses generated* by criteria you specify on your “Neighbor to Neighbor” mailing list order form.

A representative will contact you within two business days to discuss your mailing list options. Please download and print the [LCEF Mailing List Form](#) in preparation for your conversation. (If you are reading a printed version of this handbook, please visit www.lcef.org/services/demographics/ mailing_services.cfm to download the form.)

A Note About Mailing Lists

For LCEF to conduct the mailing for you, your mailing list must be certified as meeting strict U.S. Postal Service (USPS) regulations for presorted mail. For this reason, LCEF will only conduct your mailing if your list has been purchased from LCEF. All “Neighbor to Neighbor” mailing lists come precertified, and remain so for 95 days—the USPS limit—from the time it is created, as long as you do not *add* any addresses to the list. If you choose to have LCEF conduct a mailing with a “Neighbor to Neighbor” list *after* the list’s certification has expired, recertification will be necessary. LCEF will provide recertification at cost (\$75 at publication of this handbook).

A Note About Response Rates

When mailing a postcard, please keep the response rate in mind. The average response rate to a direct mail marketing piece (ie: postcard, flier, etc.) is 0.5%. A “response” is when someone calls the school, looks at the Web site or comes to your event after seeing your direct-mail piece. When deciding how many postcards you would like to order, please keep this response rate in mind. For example, if you mail to 5,000 households, the typical response would be 25 people. If you mail to 20,000 households, the typical response rate would be 100 people.

Brochure

Brochures are a necessary staple of a school marketing program. Brochures are small booklets that provide introductory information about your school such as quick facts, statistics, percentages, mission statements, and offer information important to parents. You can slip these brochures into church bulletins and sales folders, mail them to potential families, and set on display tables and welcome desks.

This standard tri-fold brochure fits comfortably into an acrylic stand and in the brochure slit of the folder pocket. These full-color brochures will be personalized with your information on five open panels, including your school’s name on the cover.

Door Hanger

Do you have a lot of volunteers, but very little money to help market your school? Organizing door-hanging walk-a-thons can quickly target specific neighborhoods in your target market. These door hangers will get the word out and make a positive first impression.

The door hangers have full-color graphics on the front and back with personalized information about your school on the back.

Business Cards

Don’t forget to give each teacher a business card to improve communication between parents and teachers. Each card should indicate phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Standard 2- by 3.5-inch business cards fit comfortably into folder slits and business card holders. Each card is customized with the teacher and administrator’s contact information.

Poster

Advertise your school by hanging these posters in area businesses, child care centers, feeder schools, neighbor churches, and busy walkways.

Each 11- by 17-inch poster contains space for customized information about your school.

Banners

It is widely accepted that it takes seven impressions before someone will remember your name. You can quickly reach seven impressions through a billboard, because people tend to drive similar patterns each day, frequently viewing your sign. But the cost of a billboard can be expensive. So create your own by hanging a banner on the side of your building or staking the banner on your property along a busy street or intersection.

These banners can be personalized with your school's information. They are vinyl indoor/outdoor banners and come ready to hang with grommets every two feet on the top and bottom:

- Tall Banner Dimensions: 6 ft. tall by 4 ft. wide
- Wide Banner Dimensions: 4 ft. tall by 8 ft. wide
- XL Wide Banner Dimensions: 7 ft. tall by 14 ft. wide

Special Uses

Do you have a special use for these designs that aren't shown on the Web site? For example, a newspaper advertisement, magazine ad, table tents, or display boards? Do you need companion graphics for your Web site? Simply click "Special Use," complete the form, and you will receive an e-mail or phone call from the *LCEF Marketing Resources* design team. Please include your phone number in the message if you prefer a call.

Promotional Products

When making recruitment visits, a professional, quality, eye-catching display with marketing materials and promotional handouts will make an impression on prospective families. Always give them something with your name on it. The ideal promotional product is something that will be used regularly to keep your name in front of them—pens, pencils, mouse pads, magnets, mugs, stadium cushions, notepads, etc. Put your school name, Web site, and phone number on everything you can!

Additional LCEF Resources

Architectural Advisory Committee

LCEF's Architectural Advisory Committee offers LCMS schools and congregations advice on how to plan and build or remodel buildings and sites.

It is not uncommon for an organization to be presented architectural plans for facilities, only to learn that the aspects of the design put the costs of construction far beyond what the school can afford.

LCEF Architectural Advisory Committee members offer advice on how to plan and build facilities that are functional, beautiful, and give clear witness to the Christian faith—while remaining within budget.

The LCEF Architectural Advisory Committee is comprised of professional, Lutheran architects and liturgical artists located across the United States.

- The architects offer advice on architectural design, planning, construction, and preservation of facilities.
- The liturgical artists answer questions about the design of Lutheran worship space, placement and selection of religious art, and the theology behind the architecture.

Specific Ways the Committee Helps

- LCEF architectural advisors and liturgical artists each offer free advice by phone, written correspondence, and/or an on-site visit.
- An architectural advisor will meet with a congregation on a one-time basis for expenses only. (Any further arrangements are between the congregation and the architect as an individual contractor.)
- LCEF also offers organizations a site and facility capacity/needs analysis through the Architectural Advisory Committee (available at a minimal cost). This analysis reports on how well your current facilities are being used and on your site's capacity for expansion.
- Thanks to the work of the committee, an Architectural Handbook is available FREE from LCEF. The handbook leads you through all the recommended steps of the entire building process.

For more information, call 1-800-843-5233 or visit www.lcef.org/services.

Capital Funding Services—Agency Division

The agency division of Capital Funding Services provides on-site consulting, training, and leadership to help individual LCMS agencies—including schools and school associations—identify, prioritize, and fund both capital and ongoing ministry needs.

Capital Funding Services' ability to bring institutional campaign expertise and resources together within the Lutheran community has made it an industry leader in service to LCMS agencies.

Capital Funding Services partners with your school to custom build your capital campaign process. We collaborate with your board and administration in discovery, design, execution, and follow-through.

What Capital Funding Services Offers Schools

Pre-Campaign:

- development audit
- comprehensive campaign feasibility studies to clarify the project scope, research funding sources, and test your readiness to move forward

Campaign:

- custom modules to involve all God's stewards (major donors, annual donors, staff, board, community)
- campaign communication resources
- attitudinal segmentation to enable targeted messages
- assistance with setting up record-keeping and reporting

Post-Campaign:

- pledge fulfillment strategies and resources
- ongoing development counsel and coaching

Capital Funding Services helps you:

- raise awareness of needs and campaign goals;
- connect supporters;
- increase unity and involvement;
- build on Biblical stewardship principles;
- inspire joyful, thankful, generous giving; and
- enable your ministry to touch more lives for Christ!

For more information, call 1-800-843-5233 or visit www.lcef.org/services.

Demographic Services

Demographic Services helps LCMS ministries understand and reach the people in their communities by providing up-to-date household and community data, and direct-marketing resources.

LCEF’s long experience with supporting LCMS organizations has proven again and again: the more fully you understand the characteristics of your community and the households within it, the better able you are to reach them with ministries that meet their unique needs.

Demographic Services assists in this area by offering tools and resources that enable you to tap into the same census and marketing research data Fortune 500 companies use to reach consumers. In addition, Demographic Services goes “the extra mile” by providing religious survey data not available elsewhere.

Each of the resources provided by Demographic Services is discussed elsewhere in this handbook, or you visit www.lcef.org/services.

Laborers For Christ

Laborers For Christ is a community of dedicated Christians who assist LCMS congregations, schools, and other organizations with the process of constructing their facilities.

Working at minimum wage for the organizations they serve, Laborers help construct facilities for the purpose of building God's Kingdom. They:

- help navigate the complexities of the building process and set an achievable project timeline;
- work with the architect to identify potential cost savings;
- complete materials procurement, subcontractor bids and contracts, budget reconciliation and costs, and final lender documents;
- manage the building project by scheduling materials, deliveries, subcontractors, laborers, and volunteers, as well as directing daily activity; and
- help with hands-on construction of facilities while involving themselves in the life and ministry of the organizations for which they work.

Organizations that participate in the Laborers For Christ program often report cost savings of 10% to 30%.

Laborers share a common desire: to use their God-given gifts and abilities to help build facilities for mission and ministry.

The goals and attitudes of workers and the spirit with which they approach your project is far different from what you would likely experience if you used a general contractor. Laborers:

- apply Christian principles on the construction site;
- are dedicated to quality workmanship;
- provide a daily Christian witness and work ethic that are positive models to the community; and
- offer the opportunity to save on construction costs, at the same time bringing a spiritual dimension to the construction process.

Regardless of the size and scope of your project, your organization can benefit from participation in the Laborers For Christ program!

For more information, call 1-800-843-5233 or visit www.lcef.org/services.

Joyful Response®

Joyful Response is a free, electronic stewardship service offered to LCMS organizations, allowing for easy and convenient electronic deposits of offerings, tuition payments, and donations from a member's personal account to the organization's LCEF StewardAccount®.

LCEF's **Joyful Response** service electronically transfers funds from your members' accounts to your organization's LCEF StewardAccount®.

With **Joyful Response**, LCMS preschools, elementary and secondary schools, universities and seminaries can offer families the *Electronic Tuition Payment Program*, a safe and convenient way to make tuition payments.

The LCEF StewardAccount offers easy access to invested funds and pays competitive market rates. It offers free check writing, monthly statements, VISA® ATM/Check Card, and online financial information through the *MyAccount* service*.

Joyful Response benefits your ministry and the families you serve by:

- creating consistent cash flow;
- increasing the efficiency of record keeping
- reducing the time and expense of writing checks; and
- continually supporting the ministry of Church Extension!

Best of all, the **Joyful Response** service is free!

For more information, call 1-800-843-5233 or visit www.lcef.org/services.

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks.

**StewardAccount* access features provided through UMB Bank, n.a.

Strategic Ministry Planning

Strategic Ministry Planning is a faith-based, biblical process that helps your organization go to God with “empty hands,” asking Him to help you set aside personal agendas and to reveal His plans for your ministry.

Strategic Ministry Planning is a facilitator-led planning process that helps your organization:

- lay the foundation for making good organizational decisions based on God’s unique calling for your church, school, or agency; and
- mobilize your members for mission.

The process is unique, much different from other business-oriented planning processes. It is a process that both invites the Holy Spirit to speak and prepares participants to listen.

Essential to the Strategic Ministry Planning process is the concept of “empty hands.” Participants seek God’s help in setting aside personal agendas for their ministries so that, through prayer and Bible study, they can invite the Holy Spirit to fill their hearts with His calling and plan. As a result, goals flow directly from this foundation and guide decisions regarding land, facilities, program, staffing, and money.

As a result of Strategic Ministry Planning, your organization can experience a unity of purpose like never before.

- See members become more active, using their energy to directly accomplish the mission of the organization.
- See your leaders leading more efficiently without stress or burnout.
- See the work of your boards and committees become more relevant, and meetings become shorter and more productive.
- Most importantly, see members and leaders look beyond themselves and make an impact for eternity within your community.

For more information, call 1-800-843-5233 or visit www.lcef.org/services.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund

10733 Sunset Office Drive, Suite 300

St. Louis, MO 63127-1020

1-800-843-5233

www.lcef.org