

Personalized Marketing for Independent Schools (8/15/22)

What is personalized marketing for independent schools?

Personalized content is critical in the process of engaging and creating bonds with prospective customers. Parents want to feel as though the school they are considering for their child is invested in them, and targeted marketing is a great way to catch their eye and give them your attention without sacrificing too much time.

Many websites and software programs offer independent schools the ability to advertise their institution to target demographics, such as parents of young children, new movers in the area, and teenagers entering high school. Customer Relations Management programs like [Finalsite](#) and [Hubspot](#) allow websites and emails to change dynamically based on your customer's information, grabbing their attention in a sea of alternatives; platforms like Google and Facebook allow schools to decide which demographics see their advertisements.

Beyond automatic personalization and targeting, your school should make an effort to build relationships with customers and create advocates for your independent school. In an [article](#) by the National Association from Independent Schools, admissions expert Nastaran Hakimi recommended responding with promptness and care to inquiries, creating emails related to students' specific interests, and communicating openly and consistently with parents. Not every piece of personalized marketing can be automated, and it's up to teachers and faculty to make parents feel heard and respected.

Why is personalized marketing so important in 2022?

According to Cube Creative, [80% of searches](#) made online are made using generic terms (e.g. "Best private schools near Miami, FL"). Your independent school must work to personalize your advertisements for parents with children in your school's age range, using targeted

advertising to generate organic interest. Millennials, who now make up over 50% of parents, are especially inclined to listen to online reviews of your school; having a strong social media presence and personalized marketing emails will keep their attention in a crowded digital marketplace.

In addition, [78% of U.S. customers](#) are more likely to purchase a product or service when faced with dynamic, relevant content tailored to their needs, and [74%](#) expressed frustration about websites and search results that lack personalization. According to Impact Digital, [geographically-based personalization](#) is especially critical for independent boarding schools, which should have websites that change language, layout, and even structure based on the location where parents of potential students access the website. With the help of a marketing company like Schoolcraft Digital, implementing these dynamic elements into your website can be easy.

How can Schoolcraft Digital help create targeted and personalized advertising?

Schoolcraft Digital's independent school natives are experts at marketing, promoting, and analyzing your independent school. On an affordable budget, they will create a comprehensive marketing plan and show you results in monthly reports that highlight your accomplishments and areas of improvement. Schedule a [free 30-minute consultation](#) with Schoolcraft Digital today to learn how your school can take advantage of its existing resources and create new ones.

Managing Online Reviews for Independent Schools (8/7/22)

How do online reviews affect your private school?

In 2022, online reviews are the first impression most parents will get of your independent school. A study published by the [Independent](#) found that 80% of millennials—the group that now makes up the majority of parents of K-12 students—will only purchase a product or service if that service has online reviews. Private schools are no different; most parents search generic terms such as “best private school near me” when first investigating a new school for their child, meaning that they will see reviews from Google, Niche, and Facebook before they see any media produced by you.

Positive online reviews are critical in determining whether your school will keep the attention of a parent. Research by [Finalsite](#) found that 68% of people form their opinions about an independent school after reading six online reviews; the more positive and authentic reviews your school has, the more likely you are to retain the interest of potential customers.

How to manage online reviews for independent schools

A Bright Local survey found that [67% of customers](#) will consider leaving a positive review when asked to rate a service, while only 40% will consider leaving a negative review. Locating satisfied parents and asking them to leave a review is a great way to boost positive ratings of your school, especially if you have a team of school advocates who love the unique learning environment you provide for their children.

Search engine optimization is also a great way to promote positive reviews for your independent schools. With the help of marketing professionals like those at Schoolcraft Digital, you can elevate positive reviews and cause them to show up first in search results. It’s also possible to have fake or slanderous reviews removed from Google. While you can’t (and

shouldn't!) remove every negative review from Google, you can report a review for any of Google's [prohibited and restricted content list](#).

How NOT to manage online reviews for independent schools

While you may ask for a review from parents whose students attend your school, you should not ask for a *positive* review. Instead, curate your list of parents from whom you solicit reviews carefully, ensuring that you will gather authentic, satisfied testimony from parents of students at your school. Don't be vague when asking for a review, either; include shortcut links to any websites on which you want reviews and, if possible, examples of other positive reviews of your school.

Despite your best efforts, you may also receive real, negative reviews from former students or parents who have a grievance with your school. On Google and Facebook, your school can [respond](#) to reviews left by satisfied (or dissatisfied) customers, meaning that you may be able to open a dialogue with people who left negative reviews. Even if the negative review in question is left up, responding with earnestness and honesty will make your school seem more trustworthy and willing to listen to criticism.

Why is online review management so important in 2022?

Online reviews are often your customer's first impression of you. However, you can also make an impression on customers using targeted advertising via Google and Facebook, preparing parents to see your school in a positive light. In cases where parents see one or two negative reviews of your school, they may focus on more positive reviews if they like what they have seen of your school already. Schoolcraft Digital's independent school natives and SEO experts can help you market your school to your ideal customers, giving them a great first look at your school.

Schedule a free 30-minute consultation with Schoolcraft Digital to learn how you can promote your school with the resources at your disposal.

Why Parents Choose Independent Schools (8/6/22)

What do parents want in a school in 2022?

In 2022, parents have an abundance of schools to choose from when deciding where their child will be educated. [A study](#) published in the Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences Journal found that four factors drive a parent's decision to send their children to an independent school: well-rounded curriculum, improved academic performance, quality instruction, and school environment. Independent schools are also able to provide [smaller class sizes](#) and a more relaxed, focused atmosphere that helps young minds to flourish. Instructors tailor lessons to their students' needs, accelerating and decelerating the pace of the curriculum when necessary.

In short, parents want a personalized, student-focused education for their children that will help them achieve academically and in their future career. Independent schools are in a unique position to provide this kind of instruction.

Why do parents choose independent schools?

According to a [survey](#) by the Council for American Private Education, the most common reason parents choose private schools is a better learning environment. Robert Kennedy of the Boarding School Review points to [three factors](#) that make the smaller class sizes of independent schools so beneficial to young minds: in a small class, students are constantly engaged with the material, teachers are able to manage their time efficiently, and children make social bonds that larger class sizes can't facilitate. In a smaller class, the teacher is able to give individual attention to each student so that none fall behind or fail to grasp key concepts.

The second reason parents choose independent schools is, of course, academic excellence. According to the National Association of Independent Schools, private school students score [significantly higher](#) on all sections of standardized tests, which are critically

important for college admissions. Private schools also saw a boom in admissions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, as their independence allowed them to quickly adapt to shifting pandemic guidelines and continue to [prioritize education for students](#).

How do I market my school to parents looking for independent schools?

School marketing is complicated in 2022, and attempting to market your school by yourself can be time-consuming and inefficient. Schoolcraft Digital is a company founded by and for independent school natives that provides comprehensive, holistic advertising for private schools. Schoolcraft will create a digital marketing campaign tailored to your needs that targets your ideal customers, intrigues new movers in your area, and helps you reach enrollment goals. Schedule a [free 30-minute consultation](#) today for an assessment of your school's marketing potential!

Marketing Your Independent School to Millennial Parents (8/2/22)

Why is marketing to millennial parents important in 2022?

According to the National Retail Federation, [over 50%](#) of today's children have millennial parents and one million millennials become new mothers each year. This means that millennials are now the primary customers of independent K-12 schools as they search for a dynamic learning environment for their children.

As the first generation to grow up alongside the internet (and later, social media), millennials frequently use Google, Facebook, and private school review sites like Niche to decide where their child ought to be educated. [85% of millennials](#) do online research when purchasing an item or committing to a service; before they even contact you, they likely know a great deal about your school based on what online reviews, parent testimonials, and your website say about your institution. The first step in getting millennials to care about your independent school is knowing what they want to see—and hear—from your institution.

What attracts millennials to an independent school?

As the most educated generation to date, millennials want academic excellence, personal attention, and a well-rounded curriculum in their child's school. When doing research on the internet, millennials respond well to [responsive, mobile-friendly website design and text](#). They want to see the stories of your students front and center in your marketing; as a generation that values authenticity, they want real photos, footage, and stories from students. Stock images, generic marketing promises, and clickbait advertising will erode your private school's image in the eyes of this demographic.

In addition, our millennial clients also want to see support for equity and equality in their child's school. According to Schneider B's school marketing experts, [50% of millennial parents](#)

belong to an ethnic or racial minority—highlighting your school’s acceptance and inclusion will attract the attention of socially-conscious millennial parents.

As they spend much of the day on social media, [using Google, Facebook, and Instagram ads](#) is the best way to reach millennial clients. Digital advertisements are [significantly more likely](#) to reach this generation than traditional advertisements, as digital advertisements can be targeted, exist on websites millennials use frequently, and create rapid conversions.

What are some good tips for marketing private schools to millennials?

Your first move should be redesigning your website if it is outdated, text-dense, or mobile unfriendly. Millennial parents will be turned off by huge walls of text about your institution, so focus on [authentic and snappy advertising](#) via graphics, images, and video marketing to stand out from the crowd. Avoid stock photos, generic marketing slogans, or centering your faculty before your students.

Millennials also value text and email communication over print communication, as they are able to promptly see and respond to important messages from their child’s school. According to Mia Charette of Finalsité, [73% of millennials](#) prefer to receive all communications by email, and they are 26% more likely to open an email with a personalized subject line. By using email automation, you can send personalized emails to your entire parent network with the push of a button.

The world of digital marketing is [complex](#), shifting, and saturated, and it’s in your school’s best interest to set money aside in the budget to hire a dedicated independent school digital marketing agency when allocating funds for the school year.

How can Schoolcraft Digital help me reach young parents?

Schoolcraft Digital can help you raise awareness of your school with millennial parents in your area. Using holistic, programmatic advertising that is personalized to your needs,

Schoolcraft Digital will help you boost conversion rates and meet your enrollment goals.

[Schedule a 30-minute consultation](#) with Schoolcraft Digital today to learn how you can attract and keep new clients.

Breaking Down the RACE Framework for Digital Marketing: ENGAGE (7/19/22)

What is the RACE framework for digital marketing?

The [RACE digital marketing framework](#), created by digital marketing expert Dave Chaffey, describes each stage of the process of attracting and converting new customers. *RACE*, which stands for *Reach*, *Act*, *Convert*, and *Engage*, is an excellent model for independent schools that need a strong, appealing, and conversion-focused digital marketing strategy. Convince parents that your school is the perfect fit for their children and turn them into advocates for your institution.

Today, we'll take a look at [the Engage stage](#). This is the fourth part in a series about the RACE framework; to learn how to navigate the *Reach*, *Act*, and *Convert* stages, read the previous articles linked.

Step one: Get customer feedback whenever possible.

When parents consider your private school for their children, they will seek out testimonials from other parents almost immediately. According to a [Finalsite article](#) about online reviews, 90% of customers will read online reviews before visiting a school, and most will also read Google or [Niche](#) reviews before even visiting your website. Facebook and Boarding School Review are also popular platforms for evaluating and rating independent schools.

Positive customer feedback is something you should be gathering during the Engage stage, seeking out satisfied and enthusiastic parents and students to recommend your school on the platforms available to them. Additionally, soliciting feedback is a great way to learn how your school can better support and connect with parents, and having [an active and robust social media presence](#) will keep current and potential customers interested and engaged.

Step two: Use personalized communication to keep parents up-to-date.

Maintaining a good relationship with the parents of enrolled students requires effort on your part. Parents want to know what is happening in their child's school, and creating a clear line of communication is key to keeping them up-to-date. Data from [Statista](#) shows that there are over 4 billion email users in 2022, and according to [Hubspot research](#), 77% of marketers have seen an increase in email communication over the last 12 months.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software is a good way to build and curate a list of your school's customers for future email blasts. Emails also keep parents engaged when they are enrolling a child in your school, outlining every important step to take in the process. In 2022, email automation, personalization, and mobile optimization is easy with the right tools, and frequent, scheduled emails are an excellent way for your [independent school to stay connected](#) with the community you build.

Step three: Build long-term customer advocacy.

By now you understand how to turn interested parents into enrollment boosts for your school—but how do you turn those parents into active advocates? Experts at [Forbes](#) and [Hootsuite](#) advise digital marketers to seek out their brand's biggest fans and cultivate them into active, vocal fans of their products; advocates like these have a high ROI at a comparatively low cost. Further, [a study by Fast Company](#) found that nine out of ten people are significantly more likely to investigate a brand for themselves if trusted friends or acquaintances recommend it. While you are recruiting your independent school advocates, be sure to keep an ear open for suggestions and ideas that could improve your communication and advertising campaigns.

Enrollment Catalyst also highlights the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations in their article "[Utilizing the Power of Brand Advocates to Market Your School](#)." Remember that genuine advocates won't need to be paid or given special privileges to spread the word about

your school; if your school has impressed them, they will want to recommend it to help their friends, peers, and fellow parents of children grades K-12.

How can Schoolcraft Digital and the RACE framework help my independent school?

During the *Reach* stage, Schoolcraft Digital's marketing experts will do market research, design landing pages that make a good first impression, and help you construct competitor and customer profiles. Moving into the *Act* stage, experts will use programmatic advertising optimized to engage (and re-engage!) potential customers. For the critical *Convert* stage, Schoolcraft Digital will create content tailored to boost enrollment and turn customer interest into conversions; after those conversions are made, they'll keep your online presence strong and turn students and parents into advocates of your independent school during the *Engage* stage.

Digital marketing is [quite complicated in 2022](#), and creating your own campaign can be time-consuming and prohibitively expensive. To learn how Schoolcraft Digital can help your school shine online, schedule a [30-minute consultation](#) today.

Breaking Down the RACE Framework for Digital Marketing: CONVERT

(7/13/22)

What is the RACE framework for digital marketing?

The [RACE digital marketing framework](#) by Dave Chaffey describes each stage of the process of attracting new customers. “RACE” stands for *Reach*, *Act*, *Convert*, and *Engage*, and the RACE model is an excellent tool for independent schools to shape their digital marketing strategy. RACE is a practical, customer-oriented way to reach and convince parents that your school would be right for their children.

Today, we’ll be taking a look at [the Convert stage](#), which covers the crucial process of turning interested website visitors into dedicated customers for your school. To learn more about the previous stage, *Act*, [click here](#).

Step one: Smooth friction points.

At this stage, you should find any holes in your enrollment marketing funnel and patch them. These “holes” include stopping points like confusing web and landing pages, unclear or superfluous promotional materials, and a lack of conversion-focused design. In [an article](#) by Katie Sehl of Hootsuite, a marketing expert describes several things you can do to increase conversions on your private school website.

Information about your school’s unique atmosphere should always be accompanied by other critical information such as contact information, newsletter sign-up prompts, and links to other important materials. High-quality landing pages are also important to this stage, as they [contribute 4.5% of lead conversions in education](#) (a higher rate than the average across all

industries). Work on [optimizing your landing pages](#) with eye-catching visuals, student testimonials, mobile-responsive elements, and a compelling call-to-action.

Step two: Track these key KPIs.

[Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\)](#) are metrics you can use to track your progress toward a desired result. During the *Convert* stage of an independent school's digital marketing funnel, [important KPIs](#) include:

- The number of people who reach out to express interest in a campus tour, informational session, or other materials.
- The percent of visitors you convert into customers.
- Enrollment increases and your proximity to your enrollment goals.

By tracking these and using [A/B testing](#) to determine what does and does not work for your marketing needs, you can quickly determine which campaigns are and are not working for your private school. You will be able to focus on marketing tactics that produce results and re-evaluate strategies that haven't been as efficient as you would have hoped.

Step three: Get feedback from real users on your website design.

Here's a great way to determine how prospective customers will respond to changes in your website and landing page design: ask them! Find people willing to look at your site as parents and record their honest feedback about what draws them in and what pushes them away. Enrollment Catalyst published a great article about ["secret shopping"](#) for private schools,

describing how many schools fail to reach out to parents to fully engage them; this is a lost opportunity!

Leaving a feedback form on a webpage is also a great idea, as people with strong opinions about your site are more likely to make them known. If you find yourself at a loss as to what is and isn't working for your school's digital marketing, listening to potential customers is a great way to get back on track.

How can Schoolcraft Digital help my school convert visitors into customers?

Navigating [the complex world of digital marketing](#) is difficult and expensive for an independent school to do alone, but Schoolcraft Digital can help. Schoolcraft Digital is a company run for independent school natives, by independent school natives. Schoolcraft Digital will create a comprehensive digital marketing strategy tailored to your school's needs, optimizing your website and social media channels to engage prospective clients and turn interest into action. [Schedule a 30-minute consultation with Schoolcraft Digital today](#) to learn how digital marketing experts can help you shatter enrollment goals and make a mark on the internet.

Breaking Down the RACE Framework for Digital Marketing: ACT (7/9/22)

What is the RACE framework for digital marketing?

As we discussed in our last post, the [RACE digital marketing framework](#) by Dave Chaffey describes each stage of the process of attracting new customers. “RACE” stands for *Reach*, *Act*, *Convert*, and *Engage*, and the RACE model is an excellent tool for independent schools to shape their digital marketing strategy. RACE is a practical, customer-oriented way to reach and convince parents that your school would be right for their children.

Today, we’ll be taking a look at [the *Act* stage](#), which is short for *Interact*. To learn more about the previous stage, *Reach*, [click here](#).

Step one: Track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The *Act* stage is all about engaging with your customers and keeping them interested in your school so that they’ll reach the *Convert* stage. To evaluate how effective your school’s customer-focused digital marketing is, you can track [KPIs](#) like:

- The average time spent on your school website
- Engagement through comments and likes on your social feeds
- The number of email inquiries you receive
- The number of leads generated.

Create KPIs for every marketing tactic you use so that you can determine how well each tactic is working; if a strategy fails to help you meet KPI goals, consider switching up your approach.

Step two: Create conversion-driven website copy and marketing materials.

Sites like [Hubspot](#) contain great advice for creating landing pages that draw customers in and encourage them to continue to interact. When your goal is driving engagement and generating conversions, your promotional materials should:

- Be easy to read. Keep your copy writing short and sweet to maintain the interest of busy parents.
- Show off your school's uniqueness. Your school has a lot to offer, so emphasize what you can offer that other schools—private and public—cannot.
- Incorporate parent and student testimonials. Parents are eager to trust the reviews of those who have chosen your school, as those parents were once in your position: searching for a place that would be perfect for their children.
- Focus on your audience. Copy should be focused on how your school can help students grow and accommodate their needs.

Step three: Personal interaction and user-generated content.

Parents want to feel that their interest in your school is received and reciprocated. One way to juggle parent-faculty relations at your school is to invest in [Customer Relationship Management \(CRM\) software](#), allowing you to reach prospective students and guardians in a punctual, professional manner. CRM software also facilitates lead nurturing, allowing you to create personalized material for your clients and to automate the process of follow-up messages to interested parties.

As mentioned in step two of the *Act* stage, user-generated content—such as testimonials and positive media about your school—is critical when you are trying to generate organic interest. Creating social media posts that encourage user interaction is a great way to collect user-generated content of this variety.

It is also critical that your school have a [robust marketing budget](#), as digital marketing is a [highly complex process](#) that requires industry expertise to navigate. A digital marketing company can help you through difficult marketing challenges, converting more leads and reaching enrollment goals.

How can Schoolcraft Digital help my school thrive?

Schoolcraft Digital is a company run for independent school natives, by independent school natives. Marketing experts will help you through every stage of the RACE framework using programmatic advertising, optimized promotions, and a comprehensive digital marketing strategy tailored to your school's needs. In addition, Schoolcraft Digital will conduct extensive market research to help your school create customer personas and perform SWOT analysis, providing this research (and more) in monthly progress meetings. [Schedule a 30-minute consultation with Schoolcraft Digital today](#) to learn how digital marketing experts can increase awareness and recognition of your independent school for a low price.

Breaking Down the RACE Framework for Digital Marketing: REACH (7/6/22)

What is the RACE framework for digital marketing?

Dr. Dave Chaffey created the [RACE digital marketing framework](#) to describe each stage of the process of attracting new customers. “RACE” stands for *Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage*, and the RACE model is an excellent tool for independent schools to shape their digital marketing strategy. RACE is a practical, customer-oriented way to reach and convince parents that your school would be right for their children.

Today, we’ll take a look at [the Reach stage](#) of the RACE digital marketing framework, which involves building awareness of your school in the eye of your target audience.

Step one: Analyze the private school market near you.

The first step in the *Reach* stage of the RACE digital marketing framework is market research. Creating [customer personas](#), which are general characterizations of the ideal people you want to reach with your advertising, is crucial when you are determining who you are trying to target. You can also perform a [SWOT \(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats\) analysis](#) to determine where your school needs help versus where your school is thriving and effective. After you complete your customer personas and SWOT analysis, you should be ready to set your enrollment goals and begin the digital marketing process.

At this stage, it’s also important to remember the [high expectations](#) that parents have for their website experiences in 2022. [A study by Finalsite](#) found that customers base 94% of their first impressions of your brand or school on your website. Mobile-first, easy-to-navigate websites are key to creating a positive first impression of your school compared to other competing schools in your area.

Step two: Set your digital marketing and enrollment objectives.

Next, you'll want to define your SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Time-bound) marketing objectives. [SMART objectives](#) help digital marketers to decide which information and metrics are important to review when determining the success of a digital marketing campaign; for an independent school, metrics that are important to watch include new student enrollment and current student retention (as well as cost per attracting each customer).

Updating your [paid, owned, and earned media](#) to reflect the best your school has to offer is also key in catching the eye of prospective parents and students. Track [KPIs \(Key Performance Indicators\)](#) such as your click-through rate, customer acquisition cost, and keyword ranking to keep your private school's marketing current.

Step three: Solidify your digital marketing strategy.

Once your SMART goals and customer personas are in place, you're ready to start increasing awareness of your private school. Generating interest in your private school is key to meeting your [desired enrollment numbers](#), so ensure that you have money in your budget for a robust digital marketing campaign. Use the customer personas created in step one to determine whom you should target, then launch a digital ad campaign that is appealing to the parents of your ideal students.

You can refine your digital marketing and online presence by [using A/B testing](#). A/B testing involves splitting your audience into several groups and showing each group a different variation of your marketing materials, tracking which pieces perform better and entice more customers to interact with them. These testing methods also reveal your audience's general preferences in online advertising, giving you guidance in promoting your school in the future.

If a potential customer shows interest by interacting with your site, but does not follow through by contacting your independent school, try [retargeting](#) them. Using tracking pixels, you

can remind customers who have visited your site to re-engage with your school with social media advertisements. Dan Hecht's retargeting and remarketing [guide](#) on Hubspot is an excellent resource for this step.

How can Schoolcraft Digital help my independent school *Reach* its target audience?

Schoolcraft Digital is a company run for independent school natives, by independent school natives. Marketing experts will help you through every stage of the RACE framework using programmatic advertising, optimized promotions, and a comprehensive digital marketing strategy tailored to your school's needs. In addition, Schoolcraft Digital will conduct extensive market research to help your school create customer personas and perform SWOT analysis, providing this research (and more) in monthly progress meetings. [Schedule a 30-minute consultation with Schoolcraft Digital today](#) to learn how digital marketing experts can increase awareness and recognition of your independent school for a low price.

Traveling During Admissions Season (7/1/22)

How should my boarding school navigate the admissions travel season?

Many boarding schools in the United States host international students on campus during the school year. In 2021 alone, 50,000 students from overseas found their home-away-from-home in American dorms. Whether your school is recruiting statewide, regionwide, or even across national borders, preparing for travel and learning to work with recruitment agents can be critical to meeting your enrollment goals. As you get ready for conferences, open houses, and marketing your school away from home, keep these traveling tips in mind.

1. Do research and make arrangements ahead of time.

Learn what accommodations are near the event you will be attending, if you attend in-person. Learn how much space you'll have, how you'll be able to present your school to others, and your schedule down to the minute. If you are working with recruitment agents (domestically or internationally), ensure that you have a clear line of communication with them, and that they are accurately and effectively representing your school.

2. Make sure that any recruitment agency you work with is high-quality.

If you are working with an international recruitment agency, [The Association of Boarding Schools](#) recommends that you work with recruiters who are certified by the American International Recruitment Council. The AIRC reviews agencies based on five standard areas: effectiveness, integrity, student and family engagement, institutional engagement, and the complaints process. If you are working with recruitment agents in the United

States, be sure to speak directly to them about your school's mission, your expectations, and how they operate.

3. Send important information to parents as soon as possible.

One crucial element of the travel process is sharing information with prospective families. Many students arriving at your boarding school will be accompanied by their parents, but in the case of some international or distant students, they may arrive alone. Your school should make an effort to help these students integrate into your academy smoothly by facilitating the moving-in process and making the new student as comfortable as possible in your academic environment. [Academic Families](#) provides a great example of a form that can be given to parents of students who need to fly unaccompanied, describing who will greet their student on arrival and what their student may experience on the flight. General information to send to parents should include arrival schedules, move-in times, the expectations of your institution, and (if relevant) [guides to navigating US immigration and customs](#) at our airports.

With these tips in mind, your admissions travel season can be smooth, painless, and productive. Whether you're going to a conference in your own state or recruiting students all the way around the world, you can meet enrollment goals with the help of your employees, marketing team, and qualified agents.

Back to School for Independent Schools: What You Should Know (6/29/22)

Back-to-school for independent schools: what you should know.

Even the most organized independent schools have difficulty creating a smooth transition from summer vacation to full-time schooling. Students new to private schooling (or, in the case of very young children, school in general) may find their new schedule confusing, exhausting, and frustrating, and it is critical that your teachers and faculty know how to maintain the most supportive environment possible. This is especially challenging for boarding schools, which also house and feed new students in an environment far away from home.

Here are four tips to thrive during the back to school rush!

1. Have a “back to school” night!

[The National Association of Independent Schools](#) highly recommends hosting a back-to-school night for parents and students. This event is an essential opportunity to share your school’s mission and goals for the coming year with parents. Teachers should prepare for this night by creating engaging, succinct presentations to show parents what content and coursework their kids will be completing in your class. Supportive, excited instructors will show parents that their children will be well-cared for at your institution. For boarding schools, back to school nights can be conducted over Zoom or other digital platforms.

2. Connect with parents and show them that you care.

Many teachers who focus on supporting their students may forget that their relationships with parents are equally important. [The National Education Association](#) has a great solution for this: teachers can email the parents of each class of students with a message about the first day, telling them what it was like and what they have learned. Teachers can

also send home a packet of papers with important details (such as their contact information, syllabus, and mission) to show parents that there is an easy and open way to contact them and establish a dialogue. The concerns of parents and students should be taken seriously and rectified by teachers or faculty; everyone wants to feel heard and seen when they reach out.

3. Find ways that students can fit into the unique environment of your school.

Lots of students—and parents—are concerned about “fitting in” at a new school.

Independent schools are equipped to foster community between students, and new students shouldn’t be allowed to fall through the cracks in the chaos of back to school preparations. Teachers and faculty should be equipped to encourage students to join extracurricular organizations, classes, and clubs that will let them meet people with the same passions. To prepare parents, consider sending them articles like [this piece from Niche](#), which will guide them through the back-to-school process and allow their children to transition confidently into the school year.

4. For boarding schools: make sure you support students through the travel process.

Traveling can be daunting, even for adults. Guide students through the process of traveling to your school as much as you can, whether that includes sending out tips about preparation, lists of items they should pack, and general move-in timelines to follow. Make sure you have an open avenue of communication about this complex issue; if your boarding school is hard to find, make it easier! Provide directions on your website and promptly answer questions from distant (especially international) students about the process of moving in.

The key to an organized, comfortable back-to-school transition is good communication between faculty, teachers, and parents. Through these connections, you can work out the back-to-school kinks and prevent students from falling behind or feeling as though they don't have a place in your school. Be ready to step in for students in need of special focus, and remember that your confidence in your school is key to inspiring the confidence of new parents and students.

Understanding the RACE Digital Marketing Funnel for Private Schools (6/26/22)

What is the RACE Planning Framework for digital marketing?

The RACE planning framework was created by digital marketing expert Dave Chaffey of Smart Insights to help brands gain new, loyal customers. The acronym, which stands for Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage, describes how to make meaningful connections that draw customers in and keep them interested. Independent K-12 schools can use the RACE planning framework in their own digital marketing strategies to meet enrollment goals and turn new families into excited supporters.

PLAN

Before you jump into the RACE planning framework, it's important to take the time to plan your approach and answer some questions about your institution.

What is your school's mission statement?

What are your enrollment goals for the upcoming school year?

Who is your audience, and how do you reach them?

Defining what you want to achieve, understanding your customers, and designing a cohesive marketing strategy is critical to reaching your goals and turning prospective families into excited customers happy to spread the word about your institution.

REACH

The first stage of the RACE enrollment funnel is Reach. This stage is about promoting your independent school online to build awareness in members of your target audiences using digital advertising, engaging blog posts, and student and family testimony.

Ask yourself these questions to help you inform your strategy during this phase:

Where does my audience spend time online?

What content do they like to see?

What does my school bring to the table?

What search terms can I use to optimize my advertisements?

What is my marketing budget for my independent school?

By using social networks, blogs, and search engine optimization, you can attract customers to channels of information owned by your independent school. The success of this phase can be determined by metrics like the number of unique visitors to your school's landing page and the cost per attracting each customer's interest.

ACT

During this phase, parents are deciding whether your private school is right for their children. Engaging, relevant digital content about your school's benefits for prospective students will encourage potential customers to interact with your institution via the internet. Your school needs to be unique, interesting, and worth investigating to keep someone's attention in a digital world that is saturated with marketing of all kinds.

Questions you should ask yourself about this phase should include:

Does my website's landing page look appealing?

Does it keep the interest of prospective customers?

Is your content relevant and current?

How can I keep the attention of potential customers once I have it?

Metrics you can use to determine your success at this part of the funnel include lead conversion rate, the time each customer spends on your site, and the amount of subscribers, likes, and shares generated on each page.

CONVERT

This is the decision-making stage at which a parent starts the enrollment process. At this stage, it's important to set up a Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) plan. [Hubspot](#) offers several tips about implementing a CRO strategy:

1. Create a homepage that makes a great first impression on customers and guides them further into your website. Emphasizing links to important pages is key to piquing your audience's interest.
2. Maintain a blog full of engaging and relevant content to inspire confidence in your school and what it offers.
3. Create a landing page that encourages interaction and conversion. Landing pages can even be personalized to show different content based on where a user is from or where they are in the content lifecycle phase, making this especially important for private schools.

ENGAGE

At this stage, you begin the crucial task of turning your customers into advocates who will remain with your school and spread the word about it through word-of-mouth advertising. Likes, comments, and shares will show you how your customers are responding to your content at this stage. Sharing user-generated content (such as positive social media posts about your

school) is a great way to increase confidence in your school online, as is direct parent testimony. Maintaining engagement with newsletters, new blog posts, and transparent communication is key in turning satisfied customers into excited customers who actively endorse your school.

How do I succeed at every stage of the enrollment funnel?

Schoolcraft Digital is here to help. As independent school natives, Schoolcraft Digital's holistic digital marketing experts are equipped to help your school *Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage*, attracting new customers who will become advocates for your institution. Schoolcraft Digital will conduct market research, spread advertisements across multiple digital platforms, devise a comprehensive digital strategy for your school, create dynamic landing pages, and more. [Schedule a 30-minute consultation](#) with Schoolcraft Digital today to learn how you can achieve success at each stage of the RACE planning framework.

Hiring a Digital Marketing Agency is Crucial for Independent Schools (6/23/22)

Why is digitally marketing your private school crucial in 2022?

Digital marketing is critical to the process of increasing awareness of your school, attracting new families, and meeting enrollment goals. [Katrina Niemisto](#), a marketing and SEO expert at Adobe, put it best when she said, “Ask the CMO of any top-tier company about their tips for reaching business goals, and a robust digital marketing strategy will undoubtedly be slotted as number one.”

Unlike traditional marketing through print or television, digital marketing provides an easy way to tailor campaigns to your ideal customers while measuring customer engagement and ROI. Having a digital marketing strategy is important when you’re trying to reach new customers, but the world of online marketing is fast-paced and highly complex. Many independent schools are making the decision to hire a qualified, capable digital marketing agency to help.

Why should I hire a digital marketing agency for my private school?

Independent Schools face a number of challenges when attempting to enter the world of digital marketing. [An article by Enrollment Catalyst](#) describes many of these challenges, including limited staffing, unimpressive landing pages, and ineffective lead nurturing for new clients. Though you may be tempted to try to overcome these challenges yourself by doing your own marketing, it’s important to consider the downsides of in-house digital marketing and the advantages of hiring a digital marketing agency.

While in-house digital marketing might cost less, [Hubspot’s experts](#) show that the cons outweigh the pros: digital marketing is complex, and it takes time, trial, and error to use

effectively. Your independent school is guaranteed to see faster results with the help of multiple digital experts working on your behalf.

How much does hiring a digital marketing agency cost?

If there is one disadvantage to hiring most digital marketing experts, it is cost. According to data from [Indeed](#), a social media expert costs \$4754 per month on average, and a digital analyst can cost \$5524 or more.

However, digital marketing experts from Schoolcraft Digital can help you advertise your independent K-12 school at a price that doesn't break the bank. For just \$2500 per month, Schoolcraft Digital's independent school natives and marketing experts will conduct market research, create holistic advertising campaigns, build digital ads and infrastructure, optimize advertisements using their SEO expertise, and design stunning landing pages for your school.

How does Schoolcraft Digital help my independent school?

1. During a 30-minute consultation, Schoolcraft Digital experts will get a better understanding of your enrollment goals and identify points of difficulty in advertising for your private school.
2. Schoolcraft will then offer services based on what your independent school needs. The team will make sure that this plan reflects the explained needs and goals established during the consultation.
3. Once you approve the proposal, Schoolcraft will begin its extensive onboarding phase, building out a digital marketing plan and setting up digital infrastructure to measure results.

4. When the first three steps are complete, your independent school marketing campaign is ready to launch!

Do you want to smash enrollment goals with a comprehensive, powerful advertising campaign at an affordable price? Schedule [a 30-minute consultation](#) with Schoolcraft Digital today to kick your virtual marketing into high gear.

Marketing Changes Coming to Google and Facebook in 2022 (6/8/22)

What marketing changes are coming to Google and Facebook in 2022?

Google and Facebook have already announced several major changes in their marketing guidelines for 2022, and more alterations to their rules surrounding privacy, personalization, and ad format are coming soon. On January 19th, Facebook removed the ability to target customers based on sensitive topics like race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or health; on June 30th, Google will remove support for the creation of expanded text ads in favor of responsive search advertising. Staying ahead of shifting marketing trends can help you to increase your enrollment and maintain a strong brand for your independent school on the internet.

What is Google's responsive search advertising?

Google is ending support for expanded text ads on June 30th, 2022. Responsive search ads, which will become Google's standard, are dynamic advertisements that adapt to become more effective over time. Marketers can enter multiple headlines and descriptions into their ad, and Google will show different combinations to different groups and gauge which combinations are most effective. Advertisements with multiple descriptions and headlines also have a better chance of coming up in various similarly-worded queries about the same topic.

How do I market my independent school through Google in 2022?

The Search Engine Journal encourages advertisers to build direct relationships with their customers in 2022, collecting first-party data along the way. According to Google's "marketing playbook" for 2022, studies found that customers love "transparent, meaningful relationships with brands they care about."

These direct relationships using first-party data for targeting are perfect in the hands of an independent school. Private schools rely on positive relationships with satisfied parents to drive enrollment and create word-of-mouth support. Using adaptive, programmatic advertising created by capable marketing employees, it's possible to reach interested parents more quickly than ever.

What changes in Facebook advertising should I know about in 2022?

Facebook has committed to increasing advertiser transparency and user privacy in 2022. Like Google, Facebook wants marketers to focus on gathering more first-party data and decreasing reliance on third-party data. While certain demographic targeting based on third-party data has been removed, other demographic targeting related to categories like family status, careers, parents, and life events is still available. A Wordstream article about Facebook advertising also outlines other ways in which you can target clients, which include behavior, lifestyle, and topics of interest; this expanded demographic choice is invaluable to building awareness of your school.

How do I effectively market my private school on Facebook?

In an article by Jessica Taylor of Portent Marketing, the senior social media strategist advised marketers to look into one thing above all else: flexibility. Facebook has made a lot of major changes to tracking and advertising to protect the privacy of customers, and it is critical for marketers to adapt and respond as these changes come. Wordstream's marketing experts advise building a base of potential customers using behind-the-scenes data from your advertisements, landing pages, and Facebook pages, building a base of potential customers who have engaged with your product's page. Your personalized data combined with Facebook's

targeting capabilities can work together to create a potent marketing strategy for your private school, locating parents who want their children to attend a high-quality independent academy.

Here's how Schoolcraft Digital can help.

As Google and Facebook continue to alter the ways in which marketers are able to reach customers, it's difficult to stay ahead of the changes being made. Hiring Schoolcraft Digital Marketing to craft an effective campaign that reaches the audience you want allows you to focus on operating your private school at maximum effectiveness while reaching new clients and meeting enrollment goals. After one 30-minute consult, Schoolcraft Digital's marketing experts can determine the best course of action you can take to reach new customers and students with the resources that you have available, then create a collaborative optimized campaign for the digital market. Schedule your 30-minute consult [here](#).

Migration Trends in 2022 (6/3/22)

Where are people moving in the United States in 2022?

In 2022, researchers at Bloomberg found an interesting pattern of migration within the United States; 82% of urban centers saw more people moving out than moving in, while 91% of suburban counties saw more people moving in than moving out. In the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are choosing to relocate to more suburban areas for increased safety and economic stability. A survey by moving company North American Van Lines found that there was a 20% increase in families moving in 2021-2022, meaning that many children will be attending new schools in upcoming years.

States seeing the most growth include Utah, Idaho, Texas, North Dakota, Nevada, Colorado, Washington, and Florida—in other words, many people are moving south and west! These states are fertile ground for private school recruitment, as independent schools are adaptable to the needs of incoming students and can help children of new movers to develop strong roots in new towns and cities.

Who is immigrating to the United States in 2022?

According to the Kino Border Initiative, quality of education is one of the major reasons immigrants from Central and South America come to the United States. Many people in countries like Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have difficulty accessing education at home, especially when they live in more rural or isolated areas. Additionally, the Migration Policy Institutes stated that many immigrants are expected to arrive from southern and eastern Asian countries like India, the Philippines, China, and Vietnam.

As the Department of Homeland Security reduces COVID restrictions and roadblocks to immigration, a new wave of immigrants is expected to settle in the United States, and private schools can take advantage of this immigration boom to find new students seeking a high-quality education.

How do I effectively market my private school to new movers?

1. Use programmatic advertising to reach prospective families.

In 2022, it's essential to reach as many potential students as you can. Schoolcraft Digital's programmatic advertising generates awareness of your independent school among your ideal target families, expanding your digital reach and finding potential students eager to explore their educational options.

2. Save room in your budget for marketing.

Marketing your private school is an essential, invaluable investment. The National Association of Independent Schools emphasizes the importance of increasing awareness of your school through marketing, "a crucial element of school operations." While many independent schools consider marketing to be a secondary concern, reaching prospective, interested parents is absolutely vital when attempting to hit enrollment goals.

3. Schedule a 30-minute consultation with Schoolcraft Digital.

Schoolcraft Digital's marketing experts are here to help. In one 30-minute consultation, our marketing experts will help you explore your options and discover what you can do to most effectively market with the tools you have available. Digital advertising is the best way to reach new students in 2022—don't let the opportunity to reach and exceed your enrollment goals pass by!

International Boarding School Enrollment Trends (6/2/22)

What are the trends in international student enrollment in 2022?

During the 2020-2021 school year, international student enrollment in private K-12 schools experienced a steep decline; according to data released by the ICEF Monitor, admissions offices experienced a 9% decline in applications from international students. This drop in enrollment can be traced to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted many students to return to their countries of origin and to avoid traveling further to avoid contamination.

However, in May of 2021, ICEF released another article stating that boarding schools are now in a position to take advantage of an increase in international interest. Through December 31st, 2022, the US Department of State has suspended in-person interviews for F, M, and J student visas, streamlining the student travel process and reducing visa wait times. Many travel restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic have also been lifted, allowing international students to return or enroll in US boarding schools.

How do I increase international student enrollment at my boarding school?

Michael Shaver, the director of international programs for the Association of Boarding Schools (TABS), emphasized the importance of using agents and personalized marketing to attract students overseas. According to Shaver, boarding schools that rely on international students were hit harder during the pandemic, but boarding schools that worked with agents and effectively marketed to prospective students were able to maintain a successful learning environment. TABS research found that 82% of affiliated boarding schools work with marketing

agents to increase their visibility on a global level, putting these independent schools at a recruiting advantage.

Boarding in the United States is an appealing option for students who wish to apply to prestigious American universities, create bonds across international lines, and rapidly improve their English proficiency. Schoolcraft Digital offers a comprehensive marketing program for boarding schools looking to reach potential international students, including in-depth market research, strategies for growth and enrollment, SEO reporting, programmatic advertisements, and translation into other languages.

Schedule a 30-minute consultation with Schoolcraft Digital now to learn how you can take advantage of the resources at your disposal to effectively promote and grow your boarding school on the international level.

Trends in Private School Enrollment in 2022 (5/27/22)

What are the trends in private K-12 school enrollment for 2022?

In 2022, private school enrollment is rising across America. According to Emily Glickman, the president of Abacus Guide Educational Consulting, independent schools have seen “unprecedented interest from the public-school community seeking entrance into private schools.” In states like Florida, where the “Step Up for Students” program was established, parents who were previously without the means to enroll their children in private school are now able to take advantage of state-approved nonprofit financial aid to choose the best school for their child’s needs.

Further research by the CATO Institute reveals a precipitous increase in private school enrollment starting in 2020 and continuing through 2022, with the majority of K-12 private schools—73.6%—reporting increased enrollment or full retention of students. Many outlets, such as the Wall Street Journal, credit this private school enrollment boom to the ability of these independent institutions to adapt to the COVID crisis, avoiding lengthy school closures and the pitfalls of digital learning.

How did the COVID pandemic affect private school enrollment?

Robert Farrington, a personal finance expert for Forbes, put it best when he wrote “among private schools, growing enrollment is the norm.” During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many high schools shut down and moved to all-virtual classes, private schools were able to adapt and continue in-person education while following the CDC’s recommended guidelines. Many parents who were able to prevent their children from losing valuable learning years to hastily-implemented virtual schooling likely feel as though they have dodged a bullet.

Though the pandemic has decreased in severity, private schools retain an edge in the eyes of many parents in their ability to personalize their education for smaller class sizes and the unique needs of every child. Parents are aware that they have many educational options to choose from, and since 2020, private school has become an increasingly popular choice.

How should you market a private school in 2022?

Here are some tips to market your independent private school for 2022 and 2023:

1. **Schedule a 30-minute consultation with Schoolcraft Digital.** Schoolcraft can help you decide how best to market your business with the resources you have available and can create a dynamic, adaptable plan to market your independent school.
2. **Set goals for your school's enrollment growth.** Creating concrete goals will help you focus on the important things when you create your ideal private school marketing plan.
3. **Focus on what makes your school unique.** Private schools have a lot of freedom to customize their marketing, highlighting what they can offer that other schools can't. Do you have a powerful mission that drives your school or offer courses and extracurriculars that make your school stand out? Talk about them!
4. **Encourage interested families.** If you have the chance to personally recruit students considering private school through community outreach, take it! Word-of-mouth advertising and parents satisfied with their care will be invaluable in growing your enrollment.

Trends in Domestic K-12 Boarding School Enrollment

What are the current trends in K-12 boarding school enrollment?

Families across America are trusting domestic boarding schools with the education of their children. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students dropped out of public schools that failed to provide an adequate learning environment for their needs, turning to independent schools and boarding schools in increasing numbers. With smaller class sizes and a personal focus on every child, boarding schools were able to adapt well to the needs of their students during the pandemic, preventing young minds from falling behind during a year of uncertainty.

In the New York Times article “The Boarding School Boom,” Rumsey Hall admissions director Ben Tuff said that working in a boarding school was “like a different world” following the increase in applications. At another boarding school, Western Reserve Academy, domestic boarding applications for the 2021-2022 school year in America were up over 20%. Furthermore, foreign and international students are predicted to return to boarding schools they left during the pandemic for the 2022-2023 school year, further increasing and maintaining enrollment.

Market your boarding school during the boarding school enrollment boom

During this period of increased interest in domestic boarding schools, schools that are “at capacity” may be tempted to cut back on their marketing and promotion budgets. However, even when school enrollment is surging, it’s critical to maintain an aggressive marketing strategy from this position of strength. Creating a strategic recruitment plan to encourage interest and maintain enrollment is invaluable to the future success of every boarding school. As the fall 2022 semester approaches, it is critical that boarding schools consider how to best take advantage of this time of

surging interest and create a marketing program that will capture the interest of prospective students.

Here are ways that you can build your boarding school in 2022:

1. Schedule a 30-minute consultation with Schoolcraft Digital.

Schoolcraft Digital will listen to your school's story, identify your unique marketing needs, and create a plan to boost your enrollment efforts.

2. Market your school from a position of strength.

As more and more parents turn to boarding schools for their adaptability and high quality of education, it's important that your school grabs and keeps their attention.

3. Observe market trends and gather research.

The world of boarding school enrollment is constantly changing. It's important to keep tabs on your own digital marketing capabilities, strategies used by your competitors, and current interest in domestic boarding schools in order to stay ahead. Schoolcraft Digital offers a comprehensive report on all of these topics and more that can help shape your strategy for the future.