

Educate Plus Conference 2016 - stimulating, informative and fun, with knowledgeable, personable speakers and great people! The most challenging part of the conference was to “only” find three things to take home to implement. It was easy to take three things away from every session, from sharing the big picture/ future of education key note audio with Management, to adding value for our Alumni by providing life-long learning opportunities beyond school, to the reminder that we need to show our ‘customers’ the reasons why they fell in love with us every day; our parents move very quickly from “please enrol me” to “show me why I should stay”!

Having a **shared common vision** was a key take-out for me. Do we (marketing) know how our teachers teach, what they do and how they engage our students? In a recent survey our parents confirmed that staff are a key asset. I will spend more time in class, beyond taking some quick images, to understand what we do. So that our messages reflect our true school spirit, and to bring our stories to life. Sharing the language we use to market is also key; advancement, management and teaching staff must all use the same language, and we hope that our parents will use the same on the side lines in the weekend! Marketing has a key role in disseminating the messages we want people to be communicating.

Conference sessions reinforced the importance of **segmenting** and **building personas** for our key target audiences beyond geographic and basic demographic information. Generational differences in both our parent and student audiences will keep us on our toes in teaching and advancement roles, and in the messaging and channels we use!

With the availability of an overwhelming amount of data, particular in the digital space, the sessions on **metrics** resonated. A number of the sessions gave solid examples of useful metrics for school in general and in both traditional and digital channels. Expanding our KPI's to a set of pre-determined key measures will allow for informed future planning of our marketing spend. Tracking online traffic more accurately when we market in other channels, with call to action to the web, will also be a key focus going forward. And a useful hint was capturing (younger) sibling information in our CRM system when a student enrolls for predictive planning purposes!

To sneak in a fourth take-out I was looking for tips on managing many projects with limited time and there were some good examples of how Marketing can use our own networks; parents, staff and students to lighten the load!

Attending conference was a healthy mix of confirmation we are doing things right, can do some things better, implement some things we are not yet doing, and catching up with wonderful like-minded people again. Thank you for the opportunity and the scholarship this year, I look forward to the next conference in NZ! Ka kite ano.

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