



Marketing with Facebook and Pinterest



In a recent NCEA webinar presented by Jacqueline Day, online ads were recommended as a cost-effective way to promote Catholic schools. Our primary target audience, millennials, no longer trusts traditional advertising such as direct mail, newspaper and magazine ads. Even Google Ad Words are becoming less effective, more expensive, and less attractive to millennials. As a result, social media ads are being recommended as a way to reach three important audiences: **prospective families** (upcoming open houses, admissions deadlines, special programs and school highlights); **current families** (school events, registration deadlines, referral programs); and **constituents** (alumni events, fund raising efforts).

What tools do you need to get started? Schools need a Facebook page, and preferably just one page, instead of multiple pages. The webinar recommended the use of *Facebook Audience Insights* to build custom audiences according to desired demographics (age, location, household income, interests, education, etc.), then creating ads tailored to that specific audience.

Facebook Ads Manager should be used to create an ad campaign. First, decide on an objective (i.e. sending people to the school's website or attracting more "Likes" to the Facebook page). Second, decide on an audience: you can create an audience with Facebook Audience Insights, import an audience from your database via an Excel spreadsheet, or utilize Facebook's tracking Pixel to compile a new audience. Third, decide where the ads will appear – Facebook, Instagram, etc. Keep in mind that most people use a mobile device so the ad needs to be eye-catching, with minimal text and a single photo or video. A program called Canva (downloadable for free) can help to create effective graphics and get the ad sizing correct. Finally, determine your daily budget, never spending more than you want to. For instance, \$5 to \$10 a day for at least five days is a great starting point. Then, track your results and adjust as necessary.

Pinterest is also a great demographic for the Catholic school market. It is an affordable way to target those who can afford private education, and it is a relatively untapped market. Advertising on Pinterest is simple and not as overwhelming as Facebook advertising. You first create compelling content (i.e. blogs on healthy back-to-school lunches, study tips for high school seniors, or tips for making the transition from elementary school to middle school) then carefully choose a pin to represent that content and drive people to that page of your website. Here are the five steps to follow when advertising on Pinterest:

- Identify your goal (i.e. boosting your Pinterest audience or driving traffic to your website)
- Choose your budget and keep it modest at first until you find out what is working.
- Create an audience, keeping your goals in mind.
- Focus on key words such as the school name, location, Catholic schools, etc. Make sure the pin is eye catching.
- Track results.

The following are some best practices to keep in mind when using online ads:

- The image is the thing. Include a video, a picture of interaction between students, a compelling photo of the school. Do *not* use the school's logo.
- Do not buy an ad without a specific goal. Every ad you purchase should be tied into your goal.
- Make sure the school's value proposition is presented – what sets the school apart from other schools?
- Always utilize a “call to action:” for example, register for open house, contact us, visit our website, or view our video.

Online ads can be done by a teacher, principal, or development director. Although the learning process does take some time, it is a cost effective way to send your message to a targeted audience, while allowing you to track the success of your efforts.

