



Key Points for Winning Students on a Dime: How to Build a Dynamo Marketing Team When You Can't Hire Staff

Before you begin: Speak frankly

Succumbing to pressure will not solve the problem. The easy thing is to start implementing ideas right and left. But don't. Take the time analyze the problem, develop a strategy, figure out what you need and communicate to your supervisor. Most of us don't report to marketing experts and it is up to us to educate our superintendents and our board about marketing our schools and what it will cost.

Step 1: Follow the 4-step PR process-Research, Planning, Implementation, & Evaluation

If you haven't done so already, complete the first step, and begin working on the second step in the 4 Step PR process: Research and Planning.

- Define WHAT problems you're trying to resolve, and reinforce some of your assumptions.
- Define WHY you need a PR team...so you can present a compelling case to your superintendent and CFO regarding additional budget money you will need to pay for your team's expertise, services and efficiency. Research will also help you to calculate the return on investment for the outreach and marketing that will be completed (which also helps with making that compelling money case)

Step 2: Get creative!

Identify WHO you need to have on your team

- What are your strengths?
- What untapped talent among colleagues might fill some gaps
- Take a look at your core competencies, strengths, and challenges. Maybe you are a strategist, but you need people who can help put on events and design materials. Or, maybe you're not

comfortable you're your strategic planning skills, and you need a strategist. Perhaps you are challenged with making a case for PR with other administrators in your district (principals, directors, etc.), and you need an external voice to discuss and consult with these individuals to help get them on board before launching other PR and outreach efforts. Make a very thorough list!

Determine HOW much it will cost—your budget

- What will your program cost? Initially obtain estimates for the services you would consider outsourcing to professionals: graphic design, printing, videography, strategic services and consulting, etc. based on your needs, as if you were going to 100% outsource these services.
- What resources can you tap? Obtain information about what kind of budget you will receive for these efforts.

Step 3: Build your team

- Internal scan: Parent volunteers, central office staff
- External scan: Contractors who provide professional services such as consulting, graphic design, strategic, photography, videography, etc.
- Based on your budget, determine which services can be outsourced, which ones need to be handled internally. Also, your budget may require you to adjust your priorities.

Step 4: Calibrate expectations-managing contractors requires time and skill

- Consider your work flow
- How will you meet? Your team may be made up of local volunteers and contractors from various locations. Calibrate your expectations of how many in-person meetings you will expect, as a result, and consider conference calls, WebEx, and Facetime for regular check-ins.
- What tools will you use? Online project management programs, such as Basecamp, provide a great way to post documents, chat, and include timelines and check ins for your entire project team. This also ensures that all project documents are stored in one spot and cuts down on managing multiple emails.

Step 5: Revisit your plan and get to work!

From here, you can begin completing the other steps in the 4-step PR plan: Planning, Implementation and Evaluation.

Contact Us!

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