

Marketing in Schools

The Use of Video for Marketing, Promotion and Training

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>> Why Should Schools or Colleges Market Themselves?

In both the Independent and Maintained sectors the concept and 'issue' of Marketing is rapidly being promoted from an occasional activity to raise the profile of a school or college to the primary function of a person or department. This shift in the culture of running a school is driven by two factors – a developing market and the emergence of technology. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of the issue of 'competition' in the education sector, it is a fact, and a fact that schools and college are being forced to recognise.

There is no doubt that times have changed significantly from the days of a child being automatically placed in the nearest school to their home and this is now recognised at government level. A brief glance at the Direct.gov.uk website brings up an article entitled "Choosing a School¹", which couldn't be more of a recognition that competition genuinely exists between schools. Moreover, where funding for schools and colleges is inextricably linked to enrolment, establishments are now faced with not just an option to market, but a *need* to market.

>> How to Market a School or College – and who to Market to?

The world of 'marketing' has changed massively over the last five to ten years in business, let alone in the education sector. The 'traditional' form of education marketing has always been the prospectus, and where many forms of 'new' marketing look to throw out the old, we are acutely aware that the prospectus is still a recognised form of gathering information about a school or college and that a lot of people still prefer the detailed, tangible form of written material and that this is unlikely to change. The question, therefore, is how to augment written material.

One would have to have been living under a rock for around a decade to be unaware of the massive impact of the Internet in all 'buying and selling' markets. Schools and Colleges have, on the whole, embraced the importance of the Internet in acting as an information resource for the 'target audience'. This issue of audience is critical. To effectively market anything you need to understand your audience. A clear feature of the modern education market is the shift in 'where' the decision is taking place, increasingly towards the student *as well as* the parent, rather than the latter over the former. Especially in Secondary Schools, the student is now able to source their own information in their own way. Word of mouth and following friends will always be the most powerful 'lure' for a student to choose a school or college, but where a decision can be influenced, we must be 'savvy' around how information is best presented.

>> The Emergence of Video in Modern Marketing

Where the web has been the 'next step' in marketing of the last ten years, video is now its 'right hand man'. Whether it is produced for the purposes of playback online or on a DVD, video is rapidly become a front line marketing tool for many organisations. We are surrounded, day in day out, with audio-visual material and there is rapidly becoming a certain expectation amongst the younger generation that everything looking to sell itself will have a presence online, on paper and now on video. Where a school or college can give a potential student or parent something extra about the school in video form there is, from our experience, a recognisable increase in the success of marketing activity.

¹ <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/ChoosingASchool/index.htm>

The big question that must be prompted therefore is why isn't everyone doing this? This is an issue to which we have dedicated significant time and attention and have come to three conclusions. We have identified three key concerns for schools and colleges which, in increasing order of importance, are as follows:

Style: There is a certain stigma attached to producing video as a marketing medium for any type of 'business' regarding how credible the footage will look. There is an enormous gulf between home movies and wedding videos and the standards we see every day on broadcast television. We are the first to admit that bad video is more of a hindrance than a help in any marketing strategy. Our approach to standards is very simple – there is no reason at all why the levels of production applied to broadcast television and film cannot be applied to the business or education markets. A video with a modern, professional and engaging style can instantly elevate the status of your establishment in the eyes of your audience.

Application: If a school or college *does* decide to use video in some way, how should it be applied? We have developed video application in six key areas for the Education Sector, each of which is explained in more detail later in this document. They are:

- *Video prospectus* – a video to augment your written material that looks to deliver both a 'feel' and factual information about your establishment.
- *Department Video* – as above, but focusing on a particular strength or department of a school or college to directly target a specific audience.
- *Induction Video* – where a lot of intake has to be 'inducted' into a school or college, a video can often be used to transmit a large amount of information very quickly.
- *Training and Development* – video can be put to use as a training tool for staff.
- *Events* – where an establishment is proud or renowned for particular events such as Fashion Shows or Drama Productions, professional video can be used not only as a record of the event but also as a revenue generating exercise.
- *Film-Making Masterclass* – an education programme developed by us to aid your Media/Film/Theatre Studies students with 'hands on' experience.

Cost: Especially in these economic times, cost is by far the biggest hindrance to a school or college considering the use of video for marketing, promotion or training. The quick answer to 'how much does this cost' is often 'you tell us'. In the past three months alone we have secured video production contracts ranging from £2,000 to £25,000. Video is a flexible tool, far more flexible than most feel it is, and we are in a position to apply any budget to achieve a goal.

>> Conclusion

Ultimately video should be seen in the light of the return one will see on the investment. As well as the various funding streams that are available to schools and colleges to help them market, a professionally produced video presence can increase enrolment, which in turn is a revenue generator in itself.

The most common application for video in schools and colleges remains in a marketing capacity. Above and beyond any other form of marketing material, written or online, video elicits an emotional response from the audience and can have huge sway in how and when decisions are made.

Affixxius Education is a dedicated Education Sector arm of Affixxius Productions, a nationally-acclaimed video production company that is renowned for its industry leading production standards, innovation and professionalism. Since its launch, Affixxius Education has served or is serving a wide range of maintained and prestigious independent sector clients across Europe.