



What is Marketing Anyway?

Before you can get started with marketing, it's worth your time to ask: if I'm not a company in the private sector, what is marketing, anyway? In this article we'll answer the most common questions we get from school leaders about how to market their schools. We'll also offer a case study showing how a superintendent in Washington is implementing effective marketing strategies in the real world.


Discussion Guide

 *"Brand is your district's reputation. The status of your brand is the way people currently think and feel about your schools."*


- When the community hears your district's name, what do they think? How do they distinguish your district's schools from others in the area?
- Does your district's current brand align with the values your district is living day-to-day?

 *"In the context of schools, marketing is the practice of influencing how people think and feel about a brand."*


- How do students, families, and community members interact with your district's brand? How do you influence those interactions?

 *"You need to determine your district's core message: a short statement that indicates a problem and provides your solution."*


- What do families in your district want from your schools?
- What does your competition offer?
- What makes you most proud of your schools?
- What is your district's core message?
- How can you use the Ridgefield case study to define and tailor your core message to meet the needs of your district?

 *"Even if you don't have the resources to launch a full-scale rebrand for your district, you should be telling positive stories that connect what students are experiencing to the value of your schools. "*

- How can you incorporate ways to brand your district into your weekly routine?
- What are the everyday moments you would like to share with the broader community?

 *"A marketing campaign is a plan for how you will get a specific audience to complete a specific action in a specific time."*


- Can you think of a marketing campaign that would amplify your district's core message?
 - Who would you influence?
 - Why should they listen to you?
 - How would you get your message to your audience?
 - What specific action do you want your audience to take next?
- What lessons can you take from the Ridgefield marketing campaign to influence how you market your district?

 *"You might be thinking this marketing thing is going to take more effort than you have time for. Can't you just hire a marketing professional to do all this for you?"*


- Who is responsible for your district's marketing strategy?
- How can you teachers take ownership of their piece of your district's marketing strategy?

 *"You probably already realize the power teachers have to influence public opinion about your school."*

- Are you currently using teachers to be part of your district marketing?
- How can you encourage and empower teachers to share your core message and be part of your marketing strategy?

 *"If you do choose to stay on social media, you have to decide how you'll deal with the negative comments you'll inevitably receive."*

- How does your district currently deal with negative comments on social media platforms?
- How does your district share positive stories with the community?

 *"Lots of educators feel uncomfortable with marketing; they feel like they're boasting. Many don't feel comfortable promoting their facilities or programs because they don't want to seem arrogant or condescending to other districts."*

- Do you worry about bragging when talking about your district?
- How can you brag on your students as a marketing strategy?



"I'm always looking up what another district will do," says McCann. "If we see a good idea somebody else is using, we will take that idea, make it Ridgefield, and we will use it."

- What other districts inspire you?
- What companies do you feel are excellent at marketing?
- How can you practice marketing in your day-to-day work?



For more information on What is Marketing Anyway?:
www.schoolceo.com/a/what-is-marketing-anyway/