

How US K-12 Catholic Schools Can Succeed: Adopt a New Business Model

Most people are aware that US K-12 public education is a disaster. (Think [SEL](#), [NGSS](#), etc.) This is a victory for the Left which focuses on curricula, while the Right works on things like School Choice (which is of definite value, but pales in comparison to the importance of curricula).

One of the main reasons US K-12 public education has not been fixed, is that it appears WAY too complex to get a reasonable handle on it. It *is* complicated, but it can be boiled down to key components you likely have not heard before.

Successful Catholic schools are a LOT more than a public school plus a religion class. Profitable Catholic schools effectively address most of the public school deficiencies.

(It stands to reason that if we have a clear understanding as to what makes a Catholic school successful – then public schools ought to emulate most of those elements!)

So let's look at what makes a successful, quality K-12 Catholic school.

To begin with, it's critical to appreciate that Catholic schooling is a **business** (*not a charity!*). Secondly, K-12 Catholic schools are in a **very competitive** business arena.

Multiple aspects will determine whether *any* business will succeed or fail (like having quality employees, like wise financial management, etc.).

Let's skip the better-understood (and common sense) elements and briefly identify three critically important business essentials for Catholic school success, that are rarely discussed in the education sector: **Product**, **Public Relations**, and **Marketing**.

Product means that they offer an education that is provably superior to alternatives available in the community.

Public Relations means that the Product is tailored to what the public wants.

Marketing means properly communicating to the public that you have a superior Product that fills (or exceeds) their needs.

Now let's break each of those down a little further.

A: Superior Product –

What does a **superior education Product** consist of? Most people would likely say that it is where a student has a solid understanding of the various subjects offered in K-12 schools – which primarily means knowledge. It is imperative that we look at this a bit differently. These three elements are ingredients of most successful Catholic schools...

1) Knowledge:

- a) Age-appropriate classical subject content (e.g., history)
- b) Course material is objective and reasonably thorough

2) Skills:

- a) Basic skills like reading, writing, and mathematics
- b) Significantly important additional skills like Critical Thinking, the Scientific Method (*a generic problem-solving technique*), and communication

3) Values:

- a) Judeo-Christian standards
- b) Patriotism

Note that US K-12 public schools fail (or do poorly) on almost all of these!

B: Public Relations –

Just because a business Product is superior, doesn't mean it fills a common need. For example., a product could be an indestructible stainless steel door, far superior to any standard wood door – but there is no common need for such an item.

Catholic schools need to have a crystal clear understanding of what parents are looking for, so that their Product is optimized to address those needs. Home Schooling is [exploding](#), so a good way to get a grasp of common needs is to talk to parents of homeschooled children, and find out why they left the public school system. The unmistakable answer is that many parents are very unhappy that public schools are now failing in ALL of the three elements explained above!

C: Marketing –

Even though a Catholic school may be offering a superior Product, tailored to meet the needs of most parents, this doesn't mean that most of their potential customers are aware of it.

How many businesses have you seen that depend on fund-raising for their financial survival? A Catholic school that is heavily dependent on fund-raising is almost always a signal that the school is not being run correctly (*see A and B above*).

Instead, the solution for Catholic school financial success is **full enrollment**. To achieve maximum enrollment, a Catholic school should start by assuring that A and B (above) are done right. Then proper marketing needs to be added to the mix. Homeschoolers and dissatisfied public school parents are the low-hanging fruit.

Right now, in most US public schools:

- 1 - children are being told WHAT to think rather than HOW to think, *and*
- 2 - the WHAT part is largely unscientific, Left-Wing, atheistic, and anti-American.

To sell themselves, Catholic schools should be committing to parents that at their school:

- 1 - children will be taught HOW to think (i.e., Critical Thinking skills), *and*
- 2 - children will be given a Judeo-Christian, pro-American, classic education.

An essential part of that is to have the school's website be unequivocal in their support of both A and B. [Here](#) is an example of a condensed commitment website page.

The good news for Catholic schools that are financially struggling, is that all three of these matters can be fixed, fairly quickly, and for a relatively low cost. But time is of the essence, and every month that goes by without making these fixes is a nail in their coffin.

FYI, this is not pie-in-the-sky fantasizing! Closely examine how a current, real-world [example](#) has been a resounding success — at a relatively low cost besides!

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