

## Marketing Your School District Just Got Easier

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Through marketing and public relations, you can manage your district's reputation, build important relationships in the community, increase the chances of successful school initiatives, and always be prepared for a crisis.

Unfortunately, many districts don't have the luxury of a marketing or PR department to develop and carry out a marketing plan. But, there are some fairly simple and inexpensive marketing efforts you can accomplish with the help of easy-to-use online tools.

Here's what you can do...

**Conduct comprehensive surveys.** Using an electronic survey tool is an easy way to discover the communication needs of your constituents and the impressions they have of your district. You can then use that information as the foundation of your marketing efforts.

**Create and maintain and up-to-date web presence.** Many schools are using content management systems to easily create and post content -- and that allows your district to always have an up-to-date web presence. The Internet is increasingly the first place people go for information -- so it's vital that your website makes a good impression.

**Send regular email news updates to your constituents.** Email distribution lists are an easy and inexpensive way to notify parents, students and community members of important school events and information via email. It's also a great way to publicize school accomplishments and garner support for school and district initiatives.

**Interact.** Give your constituents the ability to easily contact you with questions and concerns. Set up a feedback option on your website and make sure parents have access to district and teacher email addresses. Investigate the possibility of setting up a "blog" that allows you to post information about school issues and gives reader the ability to post their feedback.

**Reach out to the media.** Set up a media section on your district website that includes "fact sheet" information, contact information for your media spokespeople, and copies of previous press releases. Add reporters to your "news update" listserv to keep them informed of school events and accomplishments. These efforts can help keep a steady stream of positive school information in local newspapers.

**Be prepared for a crisis.** Whether it's a school closing due to weather or a serious incident at a school -- it's critical that you have the ability to immediately update your website and send announcements via listserv emails. This helps you control the story, not the media.

Many resources are available to help you market your district. To learn more, contact the Foundation for Educational Services at 800.850.8397 or [socs@fes.org](mailto:socs@fes.org).

Helping schools manage and control dynamic online communications.

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