

You can't exist in the “I don't know” vacuum

Presenter

Tim Caughey

Copyright ©

A sound relationship between Leadership and Community

Serving your Community by asking, listening and responding.

A sound Community Relations and Development Program begins with reliable knowledge of the communities we serve.

How would you like your coffee?

How well do you know your communities?

- Expectations
- Concerns
- Strengths
- Perceptions
- Level of commitment
- Why they are enrolling and staying
- Ideas for improvement
- The reasons they might need to leave

Contemporary or Traditional - What's your mix ?

Understanding your communities and their perceptions of your school is critical as you engage with the contemporary/millennial generation of parents and students moving through.

Traditional and Contemporary Families

Millennium or Contemporary families –

Where the first child started school from 2000 onwards

Traditional families –

Children started earlier than 2000

Of course this is not an absolute picture of family attitudes.

The Traditional Parent

Characteristics

- Nuclear family
- Accepting and supporting of authority
- Committed and involved
- Supports school discipline
- Mother involved in daily school activities, father and mother attend special events
- Mother in contact with other mothers and teachers
- Family life is worked around school life

The Traditional Parent

Characteristics

- Teachers are viewed as professionals and held in high regard
- Mother brings children to school
- Mother reads all literature from school
- Cooperates closely with the school
- Follows school calendars
- Sees the school as worthy of time and financial support
- Narrower church base

The Contemporary Parent

Characteristics

- Dual income
- Single and blended families
- Question authority
- Consumers
- Smaller families
- Multicultural
- Children dictate what they want
- Individualistic, independent, well-informed and involved in areas of personal interest

The Contemporary Parent

Characteristics

- Market conscious
- Scarcities of time, attention, trust and loyalty
- Short attention span with subject not immediately relevant to them
- Images rather than words capture attention
- Have high stress levels and suffer from the time crunch
- Impatient and intolerant of delays
- Expect instant solutions
- Expect value for money

Implications for and Interactions with the school

'Overparenting' trend worries psychologists

15 January 2013

School psychologists and counselors are concerned that overbearing parents are raising children unable to cope with failure and life outside of home, a QUT (Queensland University of Technology) study shows.

Implications for and Interactions with the school

QUT PhD researcher Judith Locke, a clinical psychologist and former teacher, said although 'helicopter' and 'lawnmower' parents were popular colloquial terms, her study proved that professionals recognised it was a problem.

https://youtu.be/k_YCp5TBr4

"Parents are typically doing the best job they can do and this type of parenting is done with the best of intentions and out of love," she said.

Implications for and Interactions with the school

"However, more effort doesn't necessarily produce a better child. There may be a point at which effort can become harmful."

Examples of excessive parenting cited in the study included a parent cutting up a 10-year-old's food, forbidding a 17-year-old to catch a train to school or confronting other parents about why their child was not invited to a classmate's birthday party.

Implications for and Interactions with the school

"Parenting professionals are concerned overparenting reduces a child's resilience and life skills because they've never had to face any difficulties," Ms Locke said.

"It could also create a sense of entitlement in children. If they have someone constantly making their life perfect, they expect everybody to make their life perfect for them."

Implications for and Interactions with the school

"This is having a huge impact on schools. Not only are schools responsible for teaching students, but they have to manage parents' extreme expectations as well."

Ms Locke said although overparenting had always existed, she believed it was now more widespread.

"These days over parenting is virtually perceived as being ideal parenting," she said.

Expectations

- What were the expectations you created?
- Were they accurate and reasonable?
- Are they being met?
- Could they ever be met?

Concerns

We need to look for patterns, concerns and issues arising in our schools

To then be proactive instead of reactive

Interpreting the information

Our strengths

- Stories are important
 - But if never told, what use are they?
- Storytellers are vital
 - They bring stories to life

Give your community an opportunity to voice
their positive stories

Perceptions

- To ignore a negative perception can be as damaging as ignoring a reality
- Respond with information and wisdom

Level of commitment

- What percentage of your community would recommend friends and/or family to enroll at your school?
- Do you know?
- Critical information

Why They are Enrolling and Staying

- The connection between why families enroll and their continuing enrolment is critical
- What is changing?
- What are the constants?
- What levers need to be pulled?

Ideas for improvement

- Any organisation not listening to its customer base can be acting in ignorance
- They are not just customers

They are:

- Custodians
- Partners
- People with a vested interest in seeing the school thrive

The reasons they might need to leave

Families rarely enroll for just one reason

and

Families never leave for just one reason

If you are operating in a vacuum you may be at risk of losing important opportunities, running well intentioned but misdirected programs, advertising and promotion, while overseeing a slowly disengaging community.

Thank You