

Inside Private School Management

January 2004 • Volume 8, Number 8

Editor: Michael Levin-Epstein

Athletic Directors Deal with Difficult Dilemmas

In 2004, private school athletic directors will be facing a variety of vexing issues. *IPSM* contacted athletic directors at three private schools across the country to find out what kept them up at nights. Here's what they told us:

"Athletes are encouraged to specialize in one sport in the hope of obtaining an athletic scholarship. But we all know what the odds are of actually getting a scholarship."

— Mark Zalin

Specialization is becoming an irreversible trend. "Athletes are encouraged to specialize in one sport in the hope of obtaining an athletic scholarship," say Mark Zalin, director of athletics at Santa Catalina School in California. "But we all know what the odds are of actually getting a scholarship," he adds.

Multiple sports have multiple benefits, experts say. Concentrating on just one sport does not produce the upside of cross-training and actually can increase the risk of injury, Zalin asserts. "I see a number of burnout injuries. I'm seeing elbow reconstructions, shoulder reconstructions, repetitive-type injuries," Zalin says.

Other athletic directors agree with Zalin on this point. Jeannette Cooper, director of athletics at Westtown School in Pennsylvania, says that recent studies indicate that students who engage in multiple sports are able to use skills developed in one activity to improve their performance in another. "Just as students benefit from a variety of teaching styles in the classroom, athletes benefit from working with multiple coaches," Cooper says.

In addition, Zalin maintains, if students focus only on one sport, they may never know if they would have been even better at another sport. "And participating in multiple sports enables you to learn how to compete," he says. Finally, participating in multiple sports allows athletes to build additional friendships, athletic directors assert.

Specialization also has brought about pressures to overschedule student athletes, in terms of travel, says John Simar, director of athletics at the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey. "Kids are being pulled in so many directions these days. We want our students to be as well-

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Dear Private School Administrator:

It's a new year. You've made your resolutions, and now it's put up or...

My resolution for *Inside Private School Management* is to start each year with a cover story that addresses one specific area of private school management. I'd like to talk to several private school administrators in that area and find out what's keeping them up at nights. In 2004, we begin with athletic programs and athletic directors.

As you'll discover, being an athletic director isn't as glamorous as some might think. There are nitty-gritty business issues to deal with, such as transporting teams to sporting events, coming at a time of diminishing resources. And there are weightier philosophical matters to wrestle with as well, like balancing school work with athletics.

The athletic directors interviewed for this article cited several major concerns, but, clearly, specialization is a front-burner issue. We see it all over the place in school sports. Kids want college scholarships. Parents want their budding stars to play on select or travel teams. Club coaches think that their sport should be practiced, if not played, year-round.

Yet, athletic directors are trying their best to swim against this rising tide of specialization, noting the benefits of participating in multiple sports and the downside of burnout and injuries.

The great football player Jim Brown participated in a number of different sports. Besides football, he excelled at track and lacrosse. Some who saw him play lacrosse for Syracuse University say that he may have been one of the best lacrosse players of all time.

There are very few Jim Browns among your student-athletes. But there are a lot of talented athletes who might just excel at a sport in which they now don't participate.

The consensus of the athletic directors interviewed for our cover story: Specialization is one trend they could do without.



Michael Levin-Epstein
Editor

Athletic Directors

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rounded as possible and engage in a number of activities, including the arts as well as athletics,” he tells *IPSM*. In addition, he says, specialization has meant that high school sports are becoming less important to many kids.

For example, he says, recruiters expect talented basketball athletes to play year-round AAU ball. But, by and large, private schools are insisting that students participate in athletics at their school. At Lawrenceville, students are expected to participate in some athletic endeavor every semester, whether it’s an interscholastic team, an intramural team or “lifetime sports” for freshman or seniors. At Santa Catalina, a basketball player can be given a waiver to play AAU ball in the fall, but must represent the school during the winter, according to Zalin.

Preference for Travel Teams

Increasingly, students themselves want to specialize, says Cooper. “This takes two forms. First, there are students who only want to play a single sport, leading to an increased demand for year-round teams. Recently, a second phenomenon is emerging: Students are preferring to participate on travel teams or league clubs rather than playing on their school-sponsored team,” Cooper tells *IPSM*. The bottom line on specialization, according to Cooper: “I feel strongly that it is neither the school’s responsibility nor is it in the students’ best interests to provide year-round resources to allow a student-athlete to specialize in a single sport...For this reason, Westtown’s athletic requirements emphasize participation on multiple, school-sponsored teams.”

Athletic directors also are dealing with athletes under increased pressure to balance school work and sports. “We like to think of our students as having an input in areas other than athletics, so we want them involved in community service and striking a balance between school responsibilities and sports. We don’t give athletic scholarships here,” says Zalin. “So what

we see are students studying on the team bus to make up for missed classes and asking bus drivers to turn on the lights on the trip back. It’s not easy.”

Transportation Issues

Speaking of transportation, it’s high on the list of the concerns of many athletic directors these days. In Pennsylvania, new transportation laws have required schools to move from 15 passenger vans to nine passenger vans, Cooper notes. As a result, she says, “we are no longer able to transport smaller size teams in vans to away games. Increased demands for commercial buses have put pressure on our budget, and the availability of commercial drivers is inconsistent in an already tight market.”

That’s not the only problem for private schools when it comes to meeting increase expectations from parents while dealing with diminishing resources. “Over the last 10 years, the number of contests and the length of the athletic schedule have increased, creating an intense demand for certified officials. In our area, officials are able to control their work environment, often suggesting both the dates and start times for contests,” says Cooper.

How is Westtown dealing with these resource developments? “We are finding that people are what make the difference in managing these hurdles,” says Cooper. “We work closely with the assigning boards for certified officials, getting schedules to the assigning boards early. Through daily contact with the bus dispatchers, we are attempting to establish ourselves as a priority customer. Gone, however, is the era of being able to call for contracted services and have our needs met.”

Decline in Sportsmanship?

So, too, sportsmanship, as we used to know it back in the day, may be gone as well. “It’s not what it was 20 or 30 years ago,” says Zalin. “Just turn on the TV. You see dancing and trash-talking, and that’s a bad influence on today’s student-athlete.”

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Inside Private School Management (ISSN 1087-0032, USPS 017477) is published monthly for \$267 per year by Aspen Publishers, Inc., at 7201 McKinney Circle, Frederick, MD 21704. Periodicals postage paid at Frederick, MD. Postmaster: Send address changes to Inside Private School Management, 7201 McKinney Circle, Frederick, MD 21704.

Subscription price: \$267/year plus postage, handling, and appropriate sales tax. Single issue price: \$27.

Business and circulation: Fulfillment Operations, Aspen Publishers, Inc., 7201 McKinney Circle, Frederick, MD 21704.

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Athletic Directors

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The California Interscholastic Federation, the governing body for school sport in the state, has taken a strong stance on sportsmanship, notes Zalin. "And our league has taken a huge stance. We now make sportsmanship awards to member schools. We talk to students about sportsmanship before each match. We make announcements over the loud speaker.

"Athletic directors can choose to be leaders in the school or just administrators. If they choose the latter, the job becomes much easier. We need more to choose leadership."

— John Simar

And we talk to parents about what good sportsmanship is all about." Moreover, Zalin adds, "good sportsmanship is expected behavior at our school. It is one of the focal points of our mission."

Teacher/Coach Era Fades

Another emerging trend: The era of the teacher/coach is fading. East Coast independent schools traditionally have filled their coaching positions from the ranks of their teaching staffs, notes Cooper. Now, however, competing demands for time, including classroom participation, practice planning, travel time, family demands, residential expecta-

tions, assisting players with college placement, have combined to make the teacher/coach model "more complex," according to Cooper.

Cooper thinks that the teacher/coach model works best for the students. Here's why, she says: "Teacher/coaches have a deeper understanding of the missions and operations of the school. They know how to negotiate the complexities of boarding school life. The teacher/coach knows players as students and as dormitory residents, allowing for better relationships. In the end, it is the people that students remember, not the school's philosophy. Greater contact between adults and students leads to stronger teams and stronger classrooms."

Health and Fitness Issues

Finally, athletic directors need to pay more attention to health and fitness issues, according to Simar. "At boarding schools, kids are not getting their rest. It's our job to make sure they live a healthy lifestyle. We can't just treat them like college students. We must be their parents away from home and be firm. Staying up all hours of the night and not eating well becomes a habit, and we need to fight that trend, he says.

The bottom line, according to Simar: "Athletic directors can choose to be leaders in the school or just administrators. If they choose the latter, the job becomes much easier. We need more to choose leadership."

For Cooper, it's a question of balancing priorities as well: "Athletic directors are the varsity jugglers in our schools. Successful athletic directors keep all the balls in the air, often not at the optimal height to allow the performance to be without flaws, but rarely allowing one of the balls to hit the ground."

Clearly, the list of thorny issues for athletic directors is not going away any time soon.

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Top Money Savings Ideas for Private School Business Managers

Every business manager, indeed every private school administrator, wants to know how to save money these days. In 1995, Philip F. Blum, business manager of the Fountain Valley School in Colorado Springs, Colo., made a presentation called *Fifty Top Money Savings Ideas* at the NAIS annual conference in 1995. Karen M. Dickey, business manager at the Hammond School in Columbia, S.C., has taken the lead in revising some of the original ideas and soliciting new ones using the NBOA listserv online discussion group. At press time, the revised publication was in its final stages. Here's the first of periodic installments of the new publication, on cutting classroom and plant costs, as compiled by Dickey (karend@bellsouth.net):

Classroom Costs

Replacement of White Boards

■ Instead of purchasing new costly dry erase boards, simply remove marker tray from the bottom of the aluminum frame of the old board, and you can then slide the old board out of the frame. Then purchase “shower” board from your local Lowe’s, Home Depot, etc. and simply slide the replacement back into the frame and reattach the marker tray. Boards look like store bought again. We’ve found that the “store bought” white board frames are significantly thinner, so we just use the new surface until it needs replacement because we always have a spare right behind the reusable surface. Marlite is one brand that can be used at \$11- \$15 per 4 x 8 sheet vs. \$150 per pre-assembled board bought from a commercial supplier.

Kindergarten Kids Names on Carpet

■ When teachers put tape (almost any tape) with their students names on the carpet to indicate where they would like their students to sit, stay, etc., the tape will leave dirty glue stains and marks on the carpet. We’ve found that you can purchase Velcro strips (non- glue back and non-self-adhesive) from a sewing center or cloth store, cut them into 2” or 3” strips and simply write the students name on the back of the “hook part” and stick the strip on the carpet. You can purchase large rolls of this without having to buy both parts (which you will not need). These strips can be vacuumed right over daily and will still stay in

place. However, anyone can easily pull the strips off the carpet and relocate them at anytime without ever having the glue mess on the carpets.

Plant Costs

Lighting Retrofit

- Install energy efficient lighting.
- Replace incandescent lights with fluorescent fixtures.
- Replace old fluorescent lamps with T-8 lamps. This reduces the electricity usage by almost 50% while actually increasing the quality of the light. Install occupancy sensors in all rooms. This will save an additional 30%.
- Replace old ballasts with efficient electronic ballasts.
- Do a thorough inventory of fixtures, lamps, and ballasts so that the replacement plan is complete.
- In some instances the more efficient new fixtures may reduce the number of fixtures/lamps needed.
- Plan ahead and implement during this summer.
- Local utility companies often have rebate programs to help defray installation costs.

Trash Removal

Competitive Pricing:

- Put your trash removal out to bid, especially if you have been with one company for a number of years.
- Investigate customer satisfaction with all potential bidders.

See Money Savings Ideas, page 6

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Money Savings Ideas

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- Require a two- or three- year fixed fee schedule to eliminate a one-year low bid followed by a sizable increase the second or third year.
- Many multi-year contracts have automatic renewal clauses. Watch these terms very carefully. Some companies may waive this existing clause if they know holding to it will result in their loss of the contract upon its expiration.

Removal:

- If use of your campus is substantially less during the summer or vacation periods, see if your trash hauler will reduce your monthly rate to reflect the reduction in the number of pick-ups needed.
- Have your monthly fee broken down by the amount charged for each container per pick-up. This information will help determine the appropriate summer and vacation period fee.

Air Conditioning Controls

- Install 0-12 hour timers to automatically cut off A/C units. They can be set up to 12 hours and will eliminate forgetting to turn unit ON/OFF. Timer cost is about \$10 - \$15 with installation at \$85 (or less). Timers are easier to use than set-back thermostats.

Refrigeration Controls

- An alarm system to monitor proper temperatures was installed in walk-ins and freezers plus heavy plastic curtains to keep the cold in. This set-up helps maintain proper temperatures and keeps maintenance/fuel costs down.

Light Sensor Switches in Classrooms

- Turn lights off when classroom is empty after 20 minutes.
- Slow-starting overhead gymnasium lighting: Install ONE on/off switch for ONE or TWO regular overhead light bulbs, supplementary to the low sodium variety. This way, if gym teacher needs to pop into gym to get something, they can turn on one switch, get a "bit" of light to see what

they are doing, and not have to wait 5 minutes for lights to get "on" before turning them off again.

Energy Audits

- Have an audit conducted for energy saving measures such as solar power, etc. Many states have programs to fund or help fund energy audits of campus buildings. In addition, some states have grant money to support energy conservation renovations made in response to energy audits. Contact state agencies and start ASAP. State funding may be limited during a given fiscal year.

Wells Used for Irrigation

- Install an irrigation system and use wells on campus to supply the water for athletic fields, lawns, etc. In times of drought, you may want to put up a sign that reads "Well water in use." Can cut use of town water by 50%. Project can be done slowly over a span of years.

Sewer Savings

- Check your water/sewer bill if you are using the city water for watering your athletic fields, etc. Normally you are billed the same amount for sewer as you are charged for water used but if you are watering your athletic fields, etc. with city water it's obvious that this water is not going back through the city's sewage system. Call your local water department and arrange to have a separate meter for water being used to water fields, grounds, etc. Contact your sewer/utility company and discuss their policies and any special meter requirements they may have.

Natural Gas Savings

- If sufficient natural gas is used, purchase it through a marketing firm, an energy pool, or where location permits, directly from the well head instead of from your local utility. Pay \$3/MCF vs. \$4.75 - \$5.00/MCF.
- Gas rates chart like a roller coaster. A little attention here can save you

See Money Savings Ideas, page 11

Legal Matters

HIPAA Privacy Rule: Why Should Independent Schools Care?

The Privacy Rule is a set of regulations developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in response to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). The Privacy Rule governs how certain protected health information (PHI) is used and disclosed by three types of covered entities: (i) health care providers (i.e., physicians, hospitals), (ii) health plans (i.e., Blue Cross/Blue Shield, school-sponsored health plan), and (iii) health care clearinghouses. This article focuses on the impact of HIPAA on independent schools.

School-Sponsored Group Health Plan

As a sponsor of a group health plan, independent schools may be subject to the Privacy Rule. The compliance burden will vary depending upon whether the group health plan is insured or self-insured and the school's role in the administration of the plan. A fully-insured group health plan provides health benefits to participants through an insurance contract with an insurance company or HMO. Conversely, a self-insured group health plan pays benefits out of the school's general assets.

1. Fully Insured Plans

If the school sponsors a group health plan that is fully insured and does not play an active role in the administration of the plan, the plan is not required to comply with most of the provisions of the Privacy Rule. In this situation, your group health plan need only comply with certain limited aspects, including the Privacy Rule's prohibitions against:

- Intimidating or retaliating against individuals for exercising their rights under HIPAA, filing a HIPAA complaint,

participating in a HIPAA investigation, or opposing any improper practice under HIPAA; and

- Requiring a waiver of rights as a condition of providing treatment, payment or enrollment in the plan, or providing eligibility for benefits under the plan.

If the school sponsors a fully-insured plan but obtains PHI from the plan because of its hands-on role in the administration of the plan, it must comply with many more aspects of the Privacy Rule. Additionally, the school must amend the plan to:

- Describe its permitted and required uses and disclosures of PHI.
- Specify that disclosure is permitted only upon receipt of a certification from the school as plan sponsor, that the plan has been amended and that the school has agreed to certain conditions regarding the use and disclosure of PHI.
- Provide adequate firewalls between the school's administration functions on behalf of the plan and its employer functions.

In the absence of an authorization, PHI may only be disclosed to the school for plan administration functions. Plan administration functions do not include employer functions or functions in connection with the school's other benefit plans. Further, the plan must maintain its own Notice of Privacy Practices, but only needs to provide it upon request.

2. Self-Insured Plans

A self-insured plan is comparable to a fully-insured plan with access to PHI and is subject to all of the administrative requirements presented in one above.

Constance H. Baker & Jason Oliver Houser

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HIPAA

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Although a self-insured plan will typically hire a third-party administrator, the contract with the third-party administrator usually states that the school serves as the “plan administrator” and is the fiduciary to the plan.

An important exception to the Privacy Rule applies to a self-insured, self-administered plan with less than 50 eligible employees. This type of plan is not a covered entity under the Privacy Rule.

In most situations, an independent school's on-site medical clinic (i.e., the infirmary or nurse's office) will not be subject to the Privacy Rule. However, since each school has a unique set of circumstances, you should conduct the following analysis.

For example, if the school sponsors a health care flexible spending account with less than 50 eligible employees and internally administers it, the flexible spending account will meet this exception.

On-Site Medical Clinics

In most situations, an independent school's on-site medical clinic (i.e., the infirmary or nurse's office) will not be subject to the Privacy Rule. However, since each school has a unique set of circumstances, you should conduct the following analysis.

1. Health Care Provider

Does your clinic or the staff who work in the clinic qualify as a covered health care provider?

The answer is yes if the clinic or staff furnish, bill or are paid for health care services. Examples of common health care providers found at a school include registered nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, physicians, psychologists, and counselors.

If your answer to this question is no, then your on-site medical clinic does not have to comply with the Privacy Rule.

2. Electronic Transactions

Does your on-site medical clinic engage in any HIPAA electronic transactions?

There are 10 specified HIPAA electronic transactions that involve the electronic exchange of certain health related information.

The main electronic transaction that may be applicable to an independent school is whether your on-site medical clinic is billing electronically for the services that it provides. Very few independent schools probably engage in such transactions.

If your on-site medical clinic does not engage in any of the specified electronic transactions then compliance with the Privacy Rule is not required.

If you answer affirmatively to both questions one and two above, your school's on-site medical clinic must comply with the Privacy Rule and you will need to address four general areas:

- Restrictions on the use and disclosure of PHI
- Issue and post a Notice of Privacy Practices
- Recognize and adhere to individual rights
- Implement administrative requirements

Conclusion

The Privacy Rule is a complex set of regulations beyond the scope of this brief overview. A violation could result in significant civil penalties and even criminal prosecution in egregious cases.

The National Business Officers Association (“NBOA”) has developed a comprehensive HIPAA Compliance Kit designed specifically for independent schools. The Kit provides practical information designed to help independent schools understand and meet their compliance obligations.

To learn more about the Kit or the Privacy Rule, please contact the authors or visit NBOA's web page at http://www.nboa.net/news_initiatives/HIPAAkit.asp. ■

Best Practices

Communicating with Alumni/ae

A few nights ago, I received a call from my alma mater. The phone rang as the kids were in varying states of nakedness, and the bathtub water was reaching its nadir. My wife was out and my children and I were goofing around. For some reason, I picked up the phone — despite the “out of area” designation on my caller ID. Through a connection worse than a cell phone in rural Maine, I heard the woman’s name, Sara, and that she was calling on behalf of the boarding school I’d attended. Although she asked if this might not be a good time to talk, I took the call to avoid having the guilt of subsequent unanswered messages. Sara also mentioned something about an online alumni directory. Having been a prep school alumni director and having contracted with a company to produce such a directory, I quickly assumed I knew where this was going. I figured the “online directory” was going to be open to alumni/ae who purchased the pricey printed version.

Sara worked through her call sheet, confirming my address and then asking me a few biographical questions. I was mildly annoyed because I’d let the school know answers to these queries multiple times in the past. She and I both had better things to do with our time. (Plus, my son and daughter were now in the bathtub pretending to create a tsunami.)

Sara was friendly and willing to repeat herself due to the poor phone connection without making me feel like an idiot for asking her to. As the call progressed, I started thinking about re-connecting with old friends. Who would stumble across the directory on the school’s website and find my listing? I had initially declined to list my kids, but I decided to give that infor-

mation to the caller, even though the school had it already.

All the while, I wondered if Sara worked for the school or was calling from someplace in Texas. I was waiting for Sara to switch from “friendly” gear into the “high-pressure” pitch to buy a printed directory. The pitch never came. Evidently, the school really was getting ready to launch an online directory (I myself had stumbled across it a few weeks earlier and wondered why I had not seen any publicity about it.) I hung up from the call feeling

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One of the best ways to ensure effective communication with alumni/ae is, quite simply, to put ourselves in their shoes.

great about my alma mater; feeling a little sheepish that I had had such evil thoughts about poor Sara; and went on with my kids’ bath thinking how much I wanted them to have the opportunity to go to my old high school.

P.Y.T.S. — Put Yourself in Their Shoes

One of the best ways to ensure effective communication with alumni/ae is, quite simply, to put ourselves in their shoes. We all have busy lives. Would we want to read the letter we’re writing? Would we want to be interrupted by this phone call? Would we even pick it up if the caller ID did not clearly state who was calling? Would we be attracted to the website if we were not paid to keep it up-to-date? We do not want to fall into the trap of communicating exclusively to our own personality

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Established in 1949, the Advancement Program Council provides a focused network for advancement professionals and volunteers in PS-12 schools to exchange ideas and information through programs, conferences and networking resources. For membership information and to learn more about APC, go to www.apcnetwork.org.

Communicating

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type or generational cohort. And we do not necessarily want to change the organizational “sound” of the school’s communication. But we would do well to see if there is something in it that catches our attention.

Phone Communication

Check to see what your call looks like in someone’s caller ID. Even if you can’t

Effective communication lies at the heart of thriving alumni/ae relations programs. A lack of effective communication often proves the undoing of even those that are most energetically managed.

change it, at least you should be aware of how it comes across. Develop guidelines about when, how and how late calls are made to alumni/ae. Do you only call them at home in the evening? Are you set up to contact them during the day at their workplace if you know that is preferable? What about weekends? To the extent possible, effective phone communication means connecting with alums when they want to hear from you.

Top Tips for Communicating with Alumni/ae

- Develop a timetable for all contact and/or interaction with alumni/ae, being especially sensitive to the juxtaposition of “friendly contacts” and requests for money.
- Monitor the general “message” alumni/ae receive from the school, right down to how the switchboard greets and handles callers. Need to put an alum on hold? Let them listen to a recording of the school’s chorus or glee club while they’re waiting.
- Strive for brevity and clarity in everything you present. Alumni/ae are inundated with mail (print and electronic) and the short, crisp, focused piece will be the one they read and respond to.
- Strike a balance between information that says “Here’s news about the school and the alumni/ae program” and opportunities for alums to express their needs, reactions, concerns and interests. “Communication” is a two-way street, and it’s important for alumni/ae to feel *served*, not sold.

E-Mail

You or your head of school may have a penchant for flashy, graphically impressive HTML emails, but do your alumni/ae? What if you moved your email communication to a simple text format? It’s fast to download over any internet connection and it’s easy to read. You can put hotlinks to your school’s website for the appealing HTML.

Online Communities

Would you go there if you had a choice? Is your school’s community using “push” or “pull” techniques to get alums to it? The “pull” technique (having lots of useful material such as contact information for friends) is certainly important. But what about “push” techniques such as sending out an email every six months or putting an ad-like reminder about the benefits of the online community in the school’s printed communications? Both methods are vital.

Alumni/ae Events

Are these all held on campus or does the school travel to alumni/ae? Do gatherings follow a structured sequence or are some more subtle, more flexible in their design? All events should accomplish a pre-determined set of objectives. The school is investing money and needs to see a return on that investment. Sometimes these objectives can be clearly stated and printed in outline form in a program. Other times they can be even more effectively accomplished without making it so obvious. You can announce your annual fund progress from the podium or you can make sure each of the alumni/ae staff and key volunteers works the progress of the annual fund into their natural conversations as they meet-and-greet. Both can be effective.

Directories

Is yours offered in both print and digital formats? Does it contain information that alumni/ae find helpful? Have you asked alums what information they want and need? One key ingredient as you collect information from alumni/ae is to pre-populate as many data fields as

possible. Think about your own reactions. Would you be more likely to fill out a nearly empty questionnaire or to make corrections on existing information even if it seems a bit out of date?

Publications

Is your alumni/ae magazine published on a predictable, periodic schedule? Or is it published whenever it comes together. Which is more appropriate for your school? Do your alumni/ae need to receive three four-color magazines each

year? Would two suffice? If your school prints an annual report, does it do it in a way that encourages alumni/ae to leaf through the pages where they do *not* expect to find their name?

Effective communication lies at the heart of thriving alumni/ae relations programs. A *lack* of effective communication often proves the undoing of even those that are most energetically managed. Consider the various ways you communicate with your alumni/ae. Make sure they're getting your message! ■

Money Savings Ideas

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dollars. Look at how you are billed. For example an approximate savings of \$175 a month was made by changing meters when demand dropped to a level allowing the use of a smaller meter.

Electrical Savings

- Negotiate with your electrical utility to consolidate all campus electric meter readings so that total usage qualifies for a lower KWH rate.
- Opportunities to save on HVAC management or changing fluorescent to T-8 electronic ballast technology abound.
- Electrical cost saving: Check with your power company to see if they offer any savings programs.
- Seal around windows that do not open.
- Review of utility rate: A number of companies will audit past utility bills to check that you have not been overcharged. They will typically retain 50% of the refunds they secure on your behalf. The school retains the other 50%. These companies are confident enough of a refund to provide this service on a contingency basis. While no one likes to give up 50% of any refund, most likely none of this refund money would ever be received without their help and expertise. If a school has been charged the wrong rate in the past, it will receive not only a refund but the correct rate will be applied in the future.

Planning Construction Costs Ahead of Time

- Plan your construction projects far enough in advance that you can make opportunities known to your parents and friends communities to get gifts in kind or offers of discount work by licensed technicians. A little planning can save big dollars.
- Don't build a school around teachers having their own classroom. Build efficient teacher offices (85SF). Make your use of the building more efficient.
- Place recycling dumpsters on campus — saves waste going to the dumpster, and you get credit for recycling.
- Look into oil, gas petrol, utilities (water, electricity) buying initiatives and co-ops. Businesses buying E.G. micro bids: Order 100 for many schools instead of one or two for one school. Form a co-op with local schools for purchasing power.
- Purchasing a facility/energy management system: This adaptable software allows you to create set points on each thermostat, control times when the system is operational while expensive. Payback can occur over a one-to-three year period.
- Consider the use of a security camera, real or fake, to discourage vandalism, theft, etc. ■

End Notes: Is rudeness affecting your school?



Are your workers rude to each other — and to managers? Is it affecting your students?

Then maybe you need instill a sense of civility in the workplace and get your employees to develop a sense of responsibility for their actions.

Rudeness in the workplace exacerbates daily stress and significantly affects the health of workers, says Teresa Heeg, founder of LifeWorks Coaching and Training, Inc. (414/ 732-9700), in Milwaukee, Wisc. “I work with people to help them take responsibility for their role in creating a culture of civility. Many times they are putting up with their own behavior as well as rudeness from others without realizing the impact it has on the culture of the organization.”

As “desk rage” becomes more prevalent, employees are driven to tears, insomnia and illness because of the rudeness of clients, customers, supervisors and fellow employees, according to Heeg. Employees often put up with rudeness simply because they don’t know how to deal with conflict, she explains. “When people begin to understand there are alternatives to violence or silence and

become aware of strategies to use to stand up for themselves without threatening others, the workplace becomes more tolerable, healthy and safe,” says Heeg.

The key to success, according to Heeg: Get senior leaders on board at your school who see civility training as part of strategic planning: “The bottom line is that each organization must decide if civility in the workplace is a worthwhile goal. If it is, the people in the organization must ask themselves questions like these:”

- How does a civility initiative tie in with our mission, vision and values?
- What does rudeness look like in our organization?
- How can we combat rude behavior and reward civility?
- What type of training do we provide?
- How can we integrate civility into our hiring orientation, training and performance appraisal systems?
- How can we support employees and managers in resolving chronic unresolved conflicts before they escalate into health-threatening patterns of behavior?

How would your school answer those questions? ■