



Identifying Previous Schools of Senior High School Students:  
A Basis for Marketing Programs

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## Introduction

The ACAP Center identified the previous schools of Senior High School Students to serve as a basis for marketing programs. Target marketing can be essential in marketing programs when detecting what previous school has the most number of students and also what school has the least number of students. We also categorized who were from public or private schools. Location of previous schools were also illustrated.

### Market segmentation

Certainly a target market is the group of people the school is working on to secure enrolments, however within that target market, there are two distinct market segments, an internal and external market. Neither should be overlooked in a school's marketing efforts because both have considerable ability to impact or influence enrolment levels.

### Internal market

A school's internal market is made up of existing school families, current students and currently employed staff. When a school markets itself, the internal market segment is often overlooked as schools spend their marketing dollar trying to attract new enrolments, secure in the belief that if they are already educating a student, they are less likely to lose them to another school.

It is worth pointing out that the internal market is critical to the success of a school and should always be viewed as a significant component of the entire target market and here's why.

School families and students are discerning consumers. Research indicates that families will change schools if they believe there are better educational options available elsewhere. Extending quality customer service, marketing and communicating



effectively to your internal market, will reduce the likelihood (or perceived need) of families to seek alternatives.

Schools refer to keeping students as student retention. In marketing speak this is referred to as customer retention. These same families may also have younger siblings. Increasingly, families are choosing schools based on the needs of the individual child and siblings are no longer automatically enrolled in the same school. This challenges schools to attract all the available sibling enrolments from school families.

The community considers existing school families, current students and staff to be experts on your school and for this reason members of the public may seek their opinion or advice on your school. In short, they are your ambassadors and it behoves the school to be able to rely on them to speak favorably of you in the community. This will only happen if they are happy and satisfied with their own personal experience of the school, in other words, if they are happy customers. This is perhaps particularly pertinent to your teachers. Because of their industry knowledge, their opinions are often sought and the public frequently interprets their actions. For example, my children attend a school where several of the teaching staff choose to send their own children. This sends a powerful message to me that the school impresses the professionals, the experts. The way I think is that if it's good enough for them and their children – with all their knowledge – then it's good enough for me and my children.

#### External market

The second market segment, the external market is more complex than many schools realise. It is not just made up of prospective families. It actually comprises of:

- Prospective families – those families conducting a search to determine the most ideal school for their family.
- Prospective students – research has shown that increasingly students are having more input over the choice of which (secondary) school they will be attending. While their decision-making process is somewhat unsophisticated, (they tend to want to stay with their friends), their input is gaining in significance and they should therefore be given real consideration in the school's marketing initiatives.
- Prospective staff – a high quality school attracts high quality job applicants.



- Suppliers – companies that deal with a school on an ongoing basis form an impression of that school, which is communicated to the wider community. It is therefore beneficial to the school's reputation to ensure that supplier relationships are maintained and reflect positively on the school.
- Local area businesses – any business in the local area that observes or even employs your students is (rightly or wrongly) considered to hold special 'inside knowledge' on those schools; other members of the community will seek their opinions. Therefore, local area businesses should be regularly communicated with and schools should seek to establish and grow strong relationships with these businesses.
- Old collegians or alumni – these are former students who still have the power to speak about a school with authority and knowledge, or importantly, send their children to your school if they hold favourable memories.

#### Catering to your market

Here's an illustration of exactly what I mean by catering to all target markets. During a market research project we conducted for a secondary college, we interviewed a mother who reported having visiting three secondary schools' open day/information evenings with her son to determine which school suited him best.

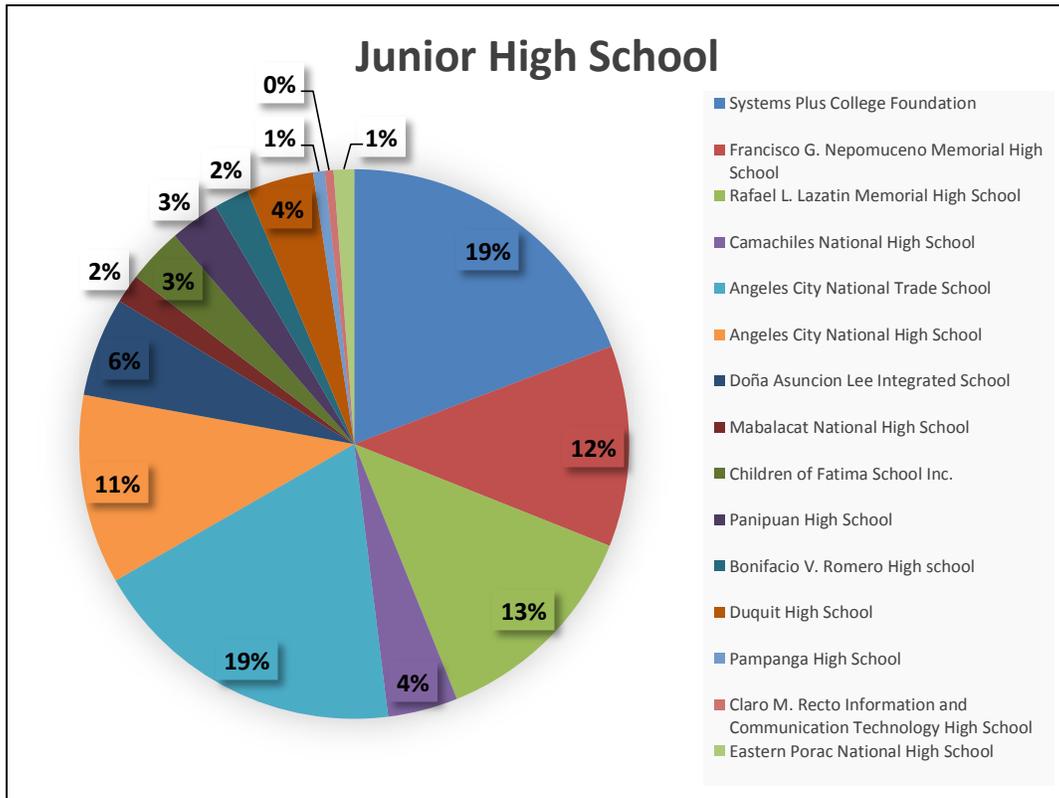
They liked all three schools. The mother had one clear preference and that was the strongest academic school, but the son still had no clear preference.

Of the three schools, one gave the boy some promotional material that included a DVD of all the fun activities on offer. The boy watched the DVD, saw the camps, travel, sport and extra curricular offerings and told his mother that was where he would like to go to school. His reasoning was that he liked the fact that this school engaged students by offering fun activities. The mother was happy enough with his choice even though it wasn't her first choice.

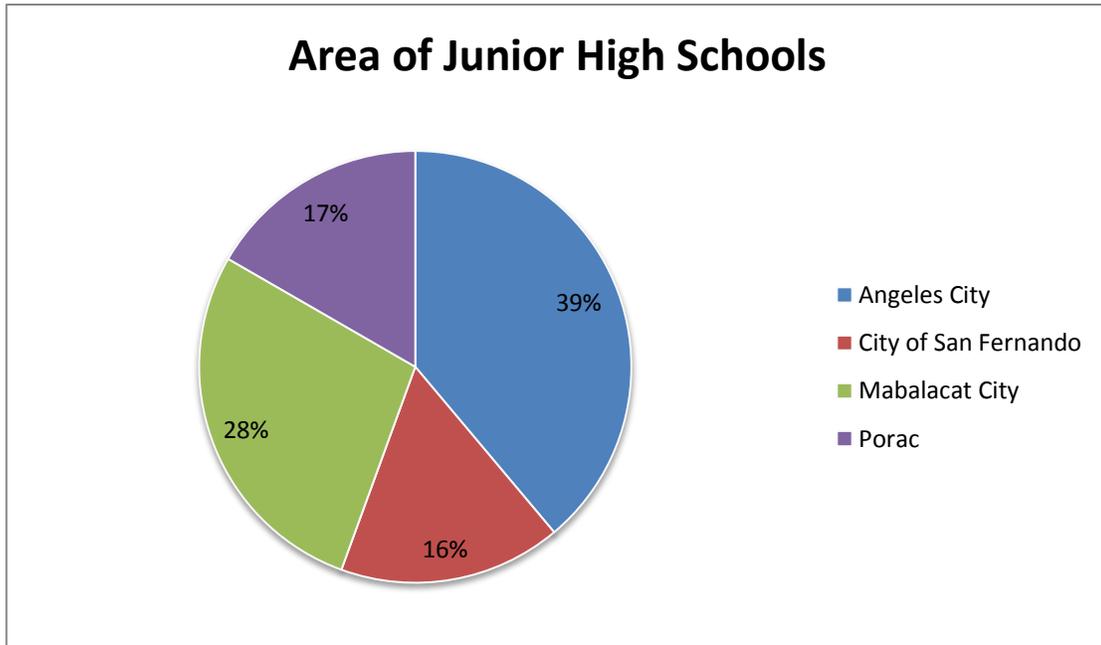
When we asked her why she was happy for her son to have the final say, she said that if he was happy and engaged, then she felt he would work harder in class.

This is an illustration of the need to appeal to two target markets, external parents and external students, because the two groups are seeking similar, but still distinctly different benefits. The parents are seeking end results and the students are seeking engagement and fun.

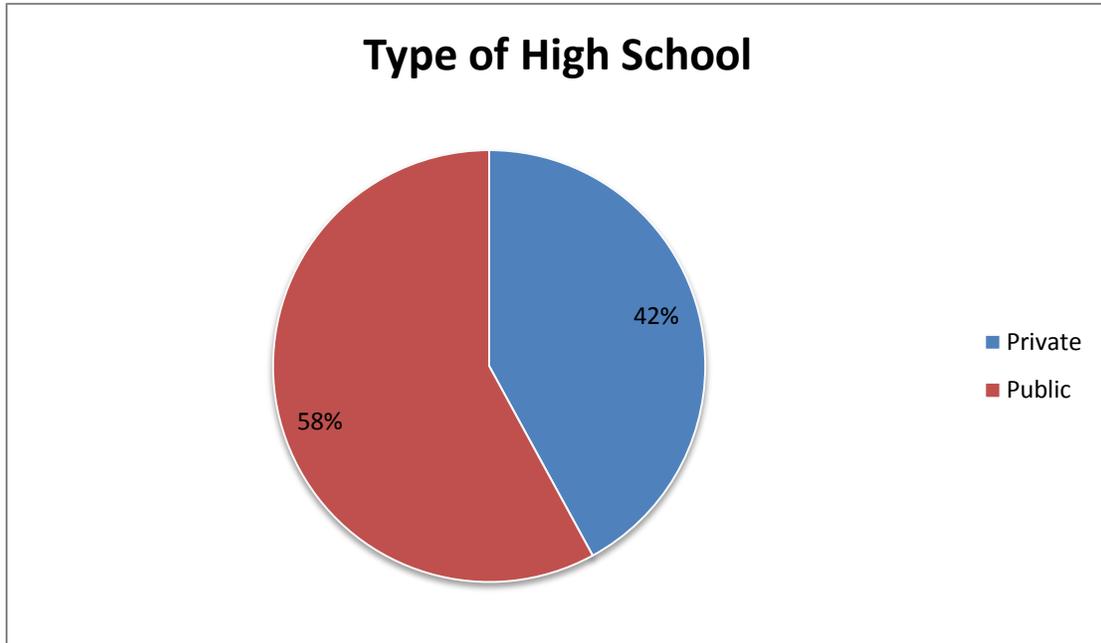
### Results



**Figure 1.** The figure above represents the distribution of students from their stratified by the location where they had their Junior High School education. Most students were from the Systems Plus College Foundation, making up approximately 19% of the total number of senior high school students. Following SPCF in the most number of students are Angeles City National Trade School (19%), Rafael L. Lazatin Memorial High School (13%), Francisco G. Nepomuceno Memorial High School (12%), and Angeles City National High School (11%).



**Figure 2.** This figure shows the area where the senior high school students' former high schools are located. Approximately 39% of the schools are from the area of Angeles City. While the minority of the schools are from Porac area, making up 17% of the population.



**Figure 3.** The figure above represents the distribution of senior high school students grouped by the type of high school they had their Junior High from. Majority of the population came from 583 Public High Schools or around 58%.



## Discussion

The location of a school has an enormous significance, and it should be set up in a suitable atmosphere. It should be far away from the noises and the polluting atmosphere where the child can easily absorb what is being taught in school. The ambience should be calm, spacious with good amenities and utilities in a visually appealing landscape. The school should have enough lighting, useful facilities such as libraries, toilets, playground, sinks, multipurpose rooms, work areas, lockers, storage spaces, teachers, administration, etc.

Due to economic and political realities, to succeed all schools must do more than “a good job in the classroom.” They need to compete for students and the competition is growing – from charter schools, international chains of private schools, home schooling and much more.

With all schools receiving their income on a per student basis, recruiting just one extra student will bring in thousands of extra dollars to the school in the first year alone – whatever type of school you are. Even those schools that are ‘full’ now must show that they are listening to and responding to parents as well as ensuring that their reputation is strong enough to survive changes in their market.

However, compared to other sectors, there is relatively little marketing expertise in the sector. The vast majority of school leaders have spent almost their entire career as teachers or administrators. They might acquire knowledge of finance and people management but few learn marketing skills on the way to the top. Compare this with the newly appointed CEO of a similar sized multi-million dollar business. They often have an MBA or equivalent qualification that has significant marketing content, as well as a dedicated marketing team.

The result is that schools have many hard working senior staff who are good at placing advertisements in local papers, running open houses and selling the school to individual parents, but have little knowledge of the wider aspects of marketing. Schools need to take a wider, strategic approach to marketing—by identifying potential customers early while creating a brand and key messages that attract and maintaining a culture of continual communication and improvement.

This approach has many positive benefits as well as improving recruitment. A marketing focus will improve the service offered by schools and make it easier to



respond to the needs of parents and students. A school will be able to align staff behind a set of core values more easily if it can show them in practice. It will find interesting stories from all parts of the organization and develop the confidence and talents of students and staff. Internal communication becomes easier. A school might end up with a new school newspaper or TV station.

On the other hand, schools that don't listen to and respond to customers can suddenly find themselves with a poor reputation compared to others. This can lead to falling enrollment and a negative spiral into trouble.

References:

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