The ultimate guide to creating an independent school

enrolment campaign

Your step-by-step blueprint for attracting and engaging prospective families



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In the competitive world of independent education, an effective enrolment campaign is more than just a series of promotional activities it's the cornerstone of your school's growth and success. With the right strategy, you can connect with the families who are the best fit for your school, guiding them through every step of their decision-making journey.

This guide will equip you with the knowledge and tools you need to create a powerful enrolment campaign that resonates with prospective families and drives results. Whether you're launching a new campaign or refining an existing one, our step-by-step blueprint will help you confidently plan, execute, and analyse your efforts.

From setting clear objectives and identifying your target audience to crafting compelling messages and measuring success, this guide covers every aspect of the enrollment campaign process. Plus, we've included practical templates and checklists to streamline your planning and ensure you stay on track.

At Pink Orange, we're experts in crafting successful enrolment campaigns that make an impact. If you're ready to take your school's strategy to the next level, we're here to help every step of the way

Learn more about us

Let's get started on building an enrolment campaign that not only attracts attention but also turns interest into action, filling your classrooms with enthusiastic and engaged students.

A step-by-step guide to planning your campaign

Effective enrolment campaigns don't happen overnight—they require careful planning and strategic foresight. To truly connect with prospective families and guide them toward choosing your school, it's crucial to begin planning well in advance.



Understanding your target audience

Research is the cornerstone of your campaign. Begin by understanding the demographics of families in your catchment area. Are they predominantly dual-income households? Do they prioritise academic excellence, or are they more interested in a well-rounded education that includes arts and sports? Use surveys, focus groups, and analysis of competitor schools to get a clear picture.

This information will inform every aspect of your campaign, from the messaging to the channels you choose. "Understanding the landscape is half the battle won. Thorough research uncovers the insights that shape your entire campaign, helping you anticipate challenges and spot opportunities before they even arise."

Xenia Muether

Founder and Director - Pink Orange

Use these questions to help you determine your target audience:

- 1. What is the primary demographic of your target audience?
- 2. What is their financial situation?
- 3. Why would they choose your school is it purely location-based, or is it an emotive decision?
- 4. What are their desires for their children?
- 5. What are their fears?
- 6. What challenges do they face when choosing a school?
- 7. What is the key message that they would like to hear from you?



Dive deeper into your brand

Understanding where your school stands in the market is crucial for developing a compelling enrolment campaign. Conduct a thorough SWOT analysis to evaluate your school's current positioning. This will help you identify your school's unique selling points (USPs) and areas where you might need to improve or differentiate yourself.

Key considerations

- 1. How can you leverage your strengths to stand out in a competitive market?
- 2. What strategies can you implement to address or mitigate your weaknesses?
- 3. How can you take advantage of opportunities to expand your school's appeal?
- 4. What plans can you put in place to counteract or navigate potential threats?
- 5. Go where your audience is for research, that is! Consider platforms like Mumsnet for authentic insights.

Almost **90% of schools** reported having marketing teams of three or fewer full-time employees. Half of schools reported having two to three staff members, while 34% reported having just one marketing staff member. (Source)

Action steps

Gather input from various stakeholders, including staff, parents, and even students, to get a comprehensive view of your school's positioning.

Regularly revisit and update your SWOT analysis as part of your ongoing strategic planning efforts.

Use the findings to inform not just your enrolment campaign, but your school's broader marketing and development strategies.

Strength

What do you do better than other schools? What resources, programmes, or facilities do you offer that set you apart? What positive feedback do you consistently receive from students and parents?

S W

What trends or changes in the education landscape could your school capitalise on? Are there emerging needs among your target audience that your school is uniquely positioned to meet? Are there gaps in the market that you can fill?

Opportunity

T What external factors could negatively impact your school's enrolment? Are there new competitors entering the market?

competitors entering the market? Are there economic or demographic shifts that could affect your target audience?

Where does your school fall short

compared to competitors? Are there

recurring complaints or areas where

you struggle to meet expectations?

What challenges have you faced in

past enrolment campaigns?

Threats

Weakness

Review your past or existing campaigns

Reviewing past campaigns is essential to understanding what strategies resonate with prospective families and what areas may need improvement. This step is about learning from experience—both successes and failures—to refine your approach and enhance future campaigns.

Assess your success

- Which aspects of your previous campaigns achieved or exceeded goals?
- What feedback did you receive from families and staff about these successes?
- How can these successes be replicated or scaled in your next campaign?

For example: If your email marketing had a high open rate and clickthrough rate, consider what made those emails effective. Was it the subject line, the content, or the timing? Use these insights to shape future email communications.

Identify your shortcomings

- Where did your past campaigns fall short?
- Were there elements that failed to engage your target audience?
- Did you encounter any logistical challenges or unforeseen issues?

For example: If you noticed low engagement with your social media posts, it might indicate that the content wasn't resonating with your audience or that you were posting at the wrong times.

Analyse your audience's behaviour

- How did prospective families interact with your campaign materials?
- Were there specific points where you lost their interest?
- Did certain segments of your audience respond better than others?



39% of marketers list optimising on-page content based on keywords as their top SEO strategy (Source)

Understand your ROI

- Did your investment in certain marketing channels or tactics yield the expected return?
- How did the cost-per-lead compare to your goals?
- Were there any unexpected costs or savings?

For example: If your print advertising didn't result in as many inquiries as digital ads, it may be time to reallocate budget resources more heavily toward digital channels.



A checklist of campaign metrics

	Metric	What it means
-	Campaign reach	 Total number of people exposed to your campaign materials. Social media reach and impressions. Email open rates and list growth.
—	Engagement	 Click-through rates on digital ads and emails. Social media likes, shares, comments, and interactions. Attendance at events such as open houses or virtual tours.
-	Conversion rate	 Inquiry-to-application conversion rate. Application-to-enrolment conversion rate. Event attendance to application conversion rate.
	Cost metrics	 Cost per lead (CPL). Cost per enrolment (CPE). Return on investment (ROI) for each marketing channel.
-	Audience insights	 Demographic breakdown of engaged audiences. Geographic distribution of inquiries and applications. Feedback from prospective families on campaign elements.
-	Process efficiency	 Time taken to respond to inquiries. Application process completion rates. Any bottlenecks or delays in communication.
-	Satisfaction index	 Surveys or feedback from families who enrolled. Feedback from those who did not complete the enrolment process. Staff insights on what worked well and what didn't.



Set clear goals and KPIs



Clear goals provide direction and help ensure that everyone involved in the campaign is working towards the same objectives. Your goals should be specific (e.g., increase enrolments by 10%), measurable (e.g., track the number of applications submitted), achievable (e.g., set realistic targets based on past performance), relevant (e.g., align with your school's strategic plan), and time-bound (e.g., achieve the goal by the start of the next academic year).

For example, if your school is looking to expand its reputation for STEM excellence, your enrolment campaign might focus on showcasing your new science labs or partnerships with tech companies.

"Clear goals and KPIs are your campaign's compass. Without them, you're navigating in the dark. They guide every decision, ensuring that every penny spent is driving towards measurable success."

George White Project Manager - Pink Orange

Use this template to start your planning

Campaign objectives

Keep them concise

What challenges will our campaign solve?	Our goals are:	
Keep them concise	Specific	
	Measurable	
	Attainable	
	Relevant	
	Time-bound	



50% of schools say their digital marketing performance was "somewhat effective" in the 2020-2021 school year. 39% rated their digital marketing performance as "very effective," while only 3% of schools rated their performance as "not very effective." (Source)

Making your goals S.M.A.R.T.					
Goal	Specificity Be concise	Measurability How to determine success	Attainability How likely are we to achieve it	Relevance How important	Time The deadline
Goal 1					
Goal 2					
Goal 3					
Goal 4					
Goal 5					



Define your messaging strategy



"Your message is the heart of your campaign. It's about connecting with families on a deeper level, showing them not just what your school offers, but why it matters to them. Every word counts."

Jayde Robertson Head of Content Strategy - Pink Orange

School marketers need to ensure that their messaging is consistent across all platforms whether it's on the school website, in social media posts, or during open-day presentations. Consistency builds trust and ensures that your school's key messages are reinforced at every touchpoint.

Once you have identified your USP, develop messaging that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of prospective families. Remember to tailor this messaging for different audience segments; for example, the concerns of parents looking at early years education might differ significantly from those considering a secondary school. For example: If your school has a unique focus on outdoor education, your messaging should highlight how this approach fosters independence and resilience in pupils, differentiating your school from others that may emphasise more traditional academic pathways.

Making room for your brand voice

Your brand voice reflects the personality and values of your school, setting the tone for all communications. When applied consistently across all platforms—whether it's in brochures, on your website, or in social media posts—it ensures that every interaction feels cohesive and reinforces your school's identity.

This consistency not only helps to differentiate your school from competitors but also fosters a sense of reliability and professionalism that can significantly influence prospective families' decisions.



"When your messaging aligns with their values and aspirations, that's when you turn interest into lasting connections."

Ridhima Chatterjee

Copywriter - Pink Orange

Descriptors of your language and voice

List all the relevant words that you think describe the type of language, tone, or voice that you want to portray through your campaign.

Our voice is:	Our voice isn't:	Notes and examples

Keywords

Understanding the right keywords to use in your strategy is essential for several reasons, including Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Google rankings. However, the primary importance lies in the fact that each brand possesses specific keywords that resonate with its audience and carry distinct meanings in different contexts.

Keywords to use We can use these frequently	Keywords NOT to use These should be avoided and replaced

Themes and topics

Topics to use <i>We can use these frequently</i>	Topics NOT to use These should be avoided and replaced



Choose your channels

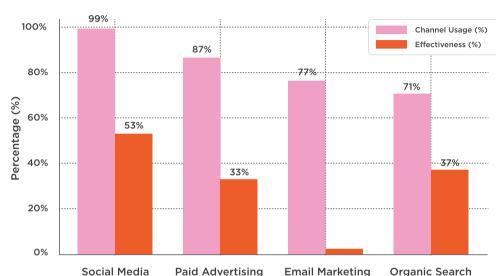
"Every platform tells a different story, and choosing the right one is like selecting the perfect stage for your message. It's about matching your content with where your audience feels most at home."

Harry Brown

Head of Design - Pink Orange

It's important to understand that not all channels are created equal. For instance, while social media might be great for brand awareness and engagement, email marketing is often more effective for nurturing leads and providing detailed information. Use a mix of channels to cover all bases, but ensure each is used strategically.

For example: If your research shows that most of your target audience is active on Instagram and Facebook, you might prioritise these platforms for your digital marketing efforts, using targeted ads and engaging content like student testimonials and virtual tour videos.



Marketing channel usage and effectiveness

Almost all schools (99%) reported using social media. Other popular marketing channels were paid advertising (87%), email marketing (77%), and organic search (71%). Most schools (53%) said that social media was the most effective digital marketing channel for driving new student leads over the past year. 37% felt that organic search was most effective, while 33% said paid advertising was most effective. (Source)



	Pros	Cons	Insights	Best for
Google Search	 High intent: Targets users actively searching for schools or related keywords. Precise targeting: Allows for specific keyword targeting and location-based ads. Measurable ROI: Clear metrics on click-through rates, conversions, and cost per click. 	Cost: Competitive bidding can drive up costs, especially for popular keywords. Complexity: Requires expertise in keyword strategy and ongoing optimisation.	Demographics: Used by individuals of all ages, but parents of school-aged children are particularly active. High intent and often the first step in the research process. Usage Patterns: Most users access Google Search via mobile, with searches peaking during early mornings and evenings.	Capturing high- intent inquiries from parents actively searching for schools in your area.
Google Display	 Wide reach: Ads appear across millions of websites, reaching a broad audience. Visual appeal: Allows for image and video ads that can capture attention. Retargeting: Excellent for retargeting visitors who have already interacted with your school's website. 	 Lower intent: Ads may reach people who are not actively searching for schools. Ad blindness: Display ads can sometimes be overlooked, especially if they're not well-targeted. 	Demographics: Diverse audience, including parents, teachers, and educational stakeholders. Usage patterns: Effective for maintaining awareness over time, particularly when combined with search ads.	Building brand awareness and keeping your school top-of-mind for potential families

Facebook	 Targeting: Offers advanced targeting options based on demographics, interests, and behaviours. Engagement: High engagement potential with options for likes, shares, and comments. Cost-effective: Generally lower cost per click compared to Google Ads 	Algorithm dependence: Organic reach is limited due to algorithm changes, making paid promotion almost essential. Ad saturation: Users may experience ad fatigue due to the high volume of ads.	Demographics: Most popular among adults aged 25-54, including parents and guardians. Usage Patterns: Peak usage times are around lunch and late evenings. Mobile is the dominant device.	Engaging with parents through community-building and targeted advertising, particularly those seeking more detailed information about your school.
Instagram	 Visual focus: Ideal for showcasing school culture, events, and student achievements through photos and videos. Story ads: Effective for short, engaging content that can drive immediate action. Younger audience: Appeals to younger parents and prospective students 	Ad costs: Can be higher compared to other platforms, especially for video content. Limited clickability: Display ads can sometimes be overlooked, especially if they're not well-targeted.	Demographics: Primarily used by younger adults aged 18-34, including younger parents. Usage patterns: Users are highly active throughout the day, with peak times in the early morning and late evening.	Creating an emotional connection through visual storytelling and engaging with younger families.
TikTok	Viral potential: Highly engaging platform with the potential for content to go viral quickly. Creative freedom: Encourages innovative and fun content that can make your school stand out. Young audience: Reaches younger demographics, including future students and younger parents.	Reputation: Still viewed as a casual platform, which might not align with more traditional branding. Learning curve: Requires a deep understanding of trends and platform- specific content creation.	Demographics: Dominated by users aged 16-24, but growing among older age groups, including parents in their 30s. Usage patterns: High engagement with frequent daily use, especially in the evenings and weekends.	Reaching younger audiences and showcasing the dynamic, innovative side of your school.

The campaign blueprint and content creation



With your research and planning phases complete, it's time to bring your enrolment campaign to life. This step is crucial as it involves mapping out your final strategy, defining your budget and KPIs, and creating content that will drive your campaign's success.

"A well-crafted blueprint ensures every element of your campaign reflects what makes your school truly special and drives the results you need."

Shalom Jacobs Lead Designer - Pink Orange

Map out the final strategy

- 1. Decide which platforms you will use based on your target audience and campaign goals. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of each platform, as well as your previous successes and any new opportunities you've identified.
- Clearly define your audience segments. Use demographic data, past enrolment patterns, and psychographic insights to create detailed audience profiles. Ensure that your targeting options on each platform align with these profiles to reach the right families.
- **3.** For search-based campaigns, finalise your list of targeted keywords. These should be a mix of high-intent terms related to school enrolment, as well as long-tail keywords that reflect specific queries parents might have during their decision-making process.
- **4. Determine how many variations of each ad you will need.** This includes different headlines, images, videos, and calls to action. Multiple variations allow you to A/B test and optimise your campaign for the best performance

Questions to guide your strategy:

- Which platforms have previously yielded the highest engagement or conversion rates for us?
- Are our audience segments well-defined, or do we need to conduct further research?
- Do our keyword choices align with our audience's search intent and queries?

Confirm your budget

- Decide how your total budget will be divided across platforms, ad sets, and campaign stages (e.g., awareness, consideration, decision). Consider allocating more budget to platforms or tactics that have previously shown strong ROI.
- 2. Set aside a portion of your budget for unexpected expenses or opportunities that may arise during the campaign.
- 3. Plan for ongoing budget reviews. Be prepared to reallocate funds based on which ads or platforms are performing best.

Questions for budget planning:

- How much of our budget should be dedicated to testing different creative variations?
- Do we have a sufficient budget to support our desired reach and frequency on each platform?



Create the content

- Develop compelling ad copy that speaks directly to your target audience's needs and desires. Ensure your messaging is consistent with your school's brand voice and values. Craft multiple versions to test different approaches.
- 2. Create a range of ad variations, including different headlines, visuals, and calls to action. This will allow you to test what resonates most with your audience.
- 3. Design visuals and produce videos that are engaging, high-quality, and aligned with your brand's aesthetic. Visual content should clearly convey your school's unique selling points and be adaptable across different platforms.
- 4. Ensure that your landing pages are optimised for conversions. They should be consistent with the ad content, easy to navigate, and include strong calls to action.

Questions for content creation:

- Does our ad copy clearly communicate the benefits of our school to prospective families?
- Are our visual assets eye-catching and tailored to the specific platforms we're using?

48% of social media marketers share similar or repurposed content across platforms with minor moderations or adaptations. In comparison, 34% make unique content from scratch for each platform, and 17% share the same content across platforms (Source)

Step 6

Execute your campaign

Executing your enrolment campaign is where all your careful planning and preparation come into play. This step is about putting your strategy into action, closely monitoring its performance, and being ready to make real-time adjustments to optimise results.

"Execution is where the magic happens. It's about bringing your vision to life, making sure every element, from design to copy, works in harmony to create a seamless experience for your audience."

Derrick Kwa

Paid Media Manager - Pink Orange

Launch your campaign

- 1. Before hitting the "go" button, review all campaign elements to ensure everything is in place. This includes verifying that all ad variations are correctly uploaded, targeting parameters are set, and tracking codes (like pixels) are properly installed on your website and landing pages.
- 2. Make sure your campaign launch aligns with your school's academic calendar and key enrolment dates. Early launches allow you to capture the attention of families who start their research well before application deadlines.

Your launch checklist

- **Check the audience:** Objectively make sure that your messaging and content are relevant to your target audience.
- Check your uploads: Are all ad creatives uploaded correctly with the right targeting?
- **Check your CTAs:** Are they relevant to your audience, messaging and campaign objectives?
- Check your links and pages: Have you tested your landing pages to ensure they are working properly?
- Check the logistics: Is your tracking set up to accurately capture campaign data?
- Check your team: Are you well prepared to deal with the results of your campaign?
- 13

Optimise and iterate

"Optimisation isn't just a phase; it's a mindset. Continuous improvement ensures that your campaign evolves, stays relevant, and always performs at its best. It's the difference between good and great."

Xenia Muether

Director and Founder - Pink Orange

Closely monitor the campaign performance

- 1. Regularly check the performance of your ads across all platforms. Look at key metrics like click-through rates, conversion rates, and cost per acquisition to gauge effectiveness.
- 2. Early on, identify which platforms, ad variations, and audience segments are performing best. This allows you to make informed decisions about where to focus your efforts.
- 3. Be prepared to act quickly if any issues arise, such as low engagement rates or technical problems with ads or landing pages. Addressing these promptly can prevent them from impacting your overall campaign success.

Questions to ask yourself while monitoring:

- Are certain ads or platforms underperforming compared to others?
- Do any metrics indicate potential issues that need immediate attention?

Key metrics to monitor:

- CTR, Conversion Rates, and ROAS
- Engagement Rates on Different Platforms
- Budget Utilisation vs. Lead Generation

Optimise and adjust

- 1. Use the data gathered from the initial results to start testing different ad variations. This could involve tweaking headlines, visuals, or targeting parameters to see what drives better results.
- 2. If you notice that certain channels or ad sets are performing better than others, consider reallocating your budget to maximise ROI. Flexibility in your budget allows you to capitalise on successful strategies.
- 3. Based on performance data, refine your audience targeting to better align with the segments that are engaging most with your ads.

Questions to ask yourself while optimising:

- Are there opportunities to improve underperforming ads through adjustments?
- How can budget reallocation improve overall campaign efficiency?
- Are there any audience segments that are more responsive than others?
- Which ad variations are yielding the highest engagement and conversions?

Maintain communication and engagement

- 1. As your campaign generates leads, maintain consistent communication with prospective families. This might involve sending follow-up emails, offering additional information, or scheduling school visits.
- 2. Ensure that inquiries and responses from interested families are addressed promptly. Quick responses can significantly enhance the likelihood of converting interest into applications.

Document your learnings for future campaigns

- 1. Keep a detailed record of what works and what doesn't throughout the campaign. This information is invaluable for refining future strategies.
- 2. Plan to conduct a comprehensive review once the campaign concludes, identifying key successes and areas for improvement.

Documentation tips:

- Are you capturing key learnings in a way that will be useful for future campaigns?
- How can this campaign's insights improve your next enrolment effort?

Experiment with different elements such as ad copy, visuals, landing page layouts, and CTAs. Use the insights gained from these tests to refine your approach.

"In the independent school sector, continuously refining your approach based on real-time data ensures that your message hits the mark, resonating with the families who matter most. It's about evolving with your audience to stay relevant and impactful."

Jayde Robertson

Mom & Head of Content Strategy - Pink Orange

How we can help transform your marketing campaigns

In the (big) world of marketing agencies, those specialising in education are a rare breed. Cracking the code of education marketing isn't a walk in the park – it's a unique beast with its own set of challenges and intricacies. Unlike other products or services, school recruitment boasts a significantly longer conversion cycle. Why? Because choosing a school for their child isn't just another purchase for parents – it's perhaps one of the most significant decisions in their lives. With factors like the reputation of the school, programme offerings, location, and school culture, not to mention the emotional and psychological impact on their child, parents have a lot on their plate. This complexity means that traditional marketing tactics often fall short, requiring more sophisticated solutions to capture and retain prospective parents' attention.

At Pink Orange, we understand that parents' decisions are driven by both rational and emotional factors. Therefore, your marketing strategy must account for the behavioural and psychological considerations of parents with young children. This means creating campaigns that resonate on a personal level, addressing their concerns, hopes, and aspirations for their children's future.

Here's a quick reminder of why you should work with us

With a whopping **50+ years** of combined experience under our belt, we've been shaking up the global education scene one campaign at a time.

As your one-stop shop, our services include everything from strategy development to paid advertising support, content production, design and development- to support from brand awareness all the way to enrolment.

We help you find the best way to engage your audiences through the right content, and turn brand equity into website traffic, leads, and students in class.



Our services

SEO

Our skilled team of paid research practitioners delivers result-driven PPC campaigns. We combine relevant data with creativity and implement successful bidding strategies using best practices. We create highly effective advertisements on Google Ads. Our agency is a Google Partner.

Paid Social

Paid social is all about engagement.

By adding Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and co. to your omnichannel marketing mix, we use social media advertising to bring the right eyes to your brand through targeted ads for your custom audiences.

Creative Strategy

We develop tailored strategies designed to achieve your goals and effectively communicate with your target audiences. Understanding the decisionmaking process of parents, our paid and organic creative strategies aim to evoke the right emotions at the right time.

Creative Assets

We are digital marketing and brand engagement experts. We carefully intertwine words and visuals to build brand awareness for your target audience. We find your audience at the right time in their decision-making process, delivering well-crafted engagement outcomes across all platforms.

Copy and Content Writing

Well-written copy tells your story. We are here to write the narrative. By picking up the pen, we place compelling, engaging content in your hands, achieving broader business goals. We win audiences by inviting and then convincing prospects that your institution is the solution to their problem.

Strategy and evaluation

We will closely evaluate your marketing strategy, assess the data, and determine whether you're meeting your objectives, and making the most of your content and strategy. If not, we will suggest changes to elevate results and performance.

CRM support

This is where the relationship between a great CRM and content comes in. Using years of expertise, we manage your customer relationship process to build positive experiences with customers, driving recruitment and enhancing retention.

Data Analysis

We use critical data analytics to predict marketing trends and target audience behaviour to optimise your digital strategy. We help you understand what drives your consumer's actions to refine your marketing campaign for optimal return on investment.

Web Development

Our web developers, UX & UI experts, and content writers help you build fully functional, customer-centric web assets crafted to navigate optimal user experience. These assets will deliver tangible results, designed with your brand in mind. We grow and adjust with you through digital landscape changes and business growth.

Marketing Automation

We set up smart triggers and automation to help you nurture your leads and ensure they are delivered with the right information to help them take action. This will free up time to focus on doing what you're great at. We create the strategy and the content that supports the success of your automation.

Social Media Strategy

No two social media algorithms are created equal! Our team of social media experts create a strategy tailored to your audience and the specific platforms that'll work for you, integrating your brand into the larger community online by engaging users with the right content, at the right time.

Community Management

The greatest brands online drive culture by being a seamless addition to users' lives. Through effective community engagement, this is made a lot easier, as we interact with your users in real time by taking feedback, responding to usergenerated content and positioning your brand as a thought leader within your industry.



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