



the agency
for education

QUICK GUIDE

CREATING THE PERFECT PROSPECTUS



Why do we need a prospectus now we've got a website?

Well that's a great question, despite the rise in popularity of social media and digital marketing, we think prospectuses are a crucial part of school marketing. Produced correctly they can really showcase your school and tell your story in a compelling, powerful way that is very difficult to replicate online.

They are an invaluable sales tool – 56% of consumers state that print advertising is still the most trustworthy type of marketing, and readers engage more with a printed prospectus, spending 20-30% longer reading text, as opposed to an online alternative. So, don't neglect it! (Forbes, 2014).

An electronic version can also be uploaded to your school website as a promotional tool, and can be shared even further with social media and emails, and allows you to track visits and interact directly with those interested in your school or academy.

In short, don't underestimate the power of a printed prospectus – it's still a great, cost-effective flexible way to tell everyone from pupils to parents and governors just how good your school is.



The key element in a perfect prospectus. What's your story?

To start the content of a perfect prospectus you should find and create your own unique story, and this forms its foundation. Gone are the days where a 100 word address from the Head and indigestible chunks of copy on every aspect of your curriculum will do!

Choosing a school is a difficult and emotional decision that effects the lives of the child and parent for countless years to come. Creating a powerful story that communicates your true values and differences in words and images in a compelling way will captivate your reader, and resonate with their own values, and what they believe makes their ideal school.

Stories are captivating for a reason. From childhood through adulthood, we are drawn to the lessons we learn, the exciting journeys we embark upon, the knowledge we gain and the opportunity to unleash our imaginations. Storytelling is the oldest form of passing knowledge and much of how we look at what we like to call facts is influenced by stories and how we interpret them.

When crafting your school story, you must illustrate what you stand for and why it matters. Storytelling is not inventing a story. In fact, its quite the opposite – its taking the great things about your school and weaving them into a narrative that engages on an emotional level, connects with your audience and persuades them to take the desired action such as a school visit.

The 3 crucial steps to produce the perfect prospectus

1. Who is the prospectus aimed at?

This may seem obvious, but you may be trying to sell your school to prospective pupils. It may not always be the parent who needs to be persuaded – certainly when it comes to choosing a Sixth Form, then the prospectus needs to appeal to the student as well as the parent. Once this is established, then you can really start to produce something that really hits the mark!

2. What's your budget?

The thorny subject of money is always on the agenda when it comes to marketing your school, but having a clear figure in place really does set the tone and scale of the project right from the start. That way, your expectations will be met – your design agency should explain right from the beginning what you can get for your money – that way nobody gets disappointed. This is one thing though to bear in mind when setting your budget – you need ask yourself if the prospectus gained you one more pupil, would it pay for itself? So it's always good to think more in terms of return on investment than a straight cost.

3. What format do you need?

Prospectuses come in all shapes and sizes, and determining what you want it to do is the first step to making this decision. For example, will the prospectus be the primary information document containing not only an overview of the school, but also all the detail –perhaps in a folder format? Alternatively, you may decide that a mini prospectus that can act as a direct mail piece is what you need. Both of these formats are valid, but are designed to perform different jobs when it comes to marketing your school.

5 Secrets that make perfect prospectus

1. Tell your story in a powerful way

Once you've established what your story is you need to tell it in the most compelling and emotional way. Your prospectus is your platform to tell everybody your unique story, and this means that every aspect of the prospectus must be thought through from the words to the design and format it must hit the spot, just good it not good enough!

2. A picture tells a thousand words

High quality imagery is at the heart of every great prospectus. To create the right impression, the blurry, low-resolution pictures shot on a teacher's mobile phone are not going to do the job! Investing in a professional photographer to capture the all important keynote images you need pays dividends. The pictures not only make the prospectus come alive, but can also be used across the board on your website, in ads and press releases – in fact anywhere you need to enhance your school's image.

3. Ideas that stand out from the crowd

The school marketplace is crowded with prospectuses that look the same. Getting a big idea that sets your school apart can be difficult, but pays dividends in the end. This can take many different forms – it can be the concept, shape and size, print finish – there are a myriad of ways to be creative when it comes to the design and overall idea behind the prospectus.

5 Secrets of that make perfect prospectus

4. Aim for as high quality print finish as possible

There's little point in making all the effort up front only for the final printed version letting the prospectus down. The end result must be produced to the highest standard, but obviously within your budget. There are a myriad of factors that effect print quality and cost, so liaising closely with your designers or printers direct will ensure that you get the best quality result for your money.

5. Produce a prospectus that doesn't date

Your new prospectus needs a reasonable shelf life to return the investment you've made in it. This means not publishing a list of staff (who can come and go), last year's academic results because within months they're history, and also for independent schools, the fees as these will change every academic year.



Who are The Agency for Education?

The Agency for Education are specialists in design, branding, marketing, graphic design, advertising and digital media for schools, academies, colleges and universities. We can produce everything you need to market your school, enhance your school's environment or communicate with pupils, students, parents and the wider world.

From a one-off project to a complete brand review, we can advise you at a strategic level, creating bespoke marketing and communications designed to deliver results.

Because we appreciate every school is different, we approach each prospectus design with a fresh pair of eyes. We always strive to produce a guide to your school that is different, vibrant and that really sets you apart.

We have produced many prospectuses that have hit the mark for a very varied collection of schools from large independent schools to academies. A few case studies are included here, but if you would like see more of our work visit www.theagencyforeducation.co.uk. Alternatively, if you would like a no obligation chat about any school marketing project, just contact us today on 0121 224 8300 or email info@theagencyforeducation.co.uk



Big ideas for George Dixon Academy

CLIENT

George Dixon Academy | Birmingham

PROJECT

Sixth Form Prospectus

SERVICES

Brand Strategy

Identity

Design for Print

Copywriting

Print production

George Dixon Academy (GDA) needed help to position the Sixth Form more effectively within the school community and address declining numbers. GDA want the Sixth Form becomes the natural pathway for pupils through the school, but a reduction in applications suggests that more could be done to improve perception, communication and profile within GDA.

The Agency were commissioned to develop the brand and communication material to give the Sixth Form its own character within the school. Based on the results of research we conducted with staff and pupils, we developed a brand and messaging structure that would form the basis for all future communications, internally and externally.

The concept we developed really told GDA's story. "The small sixth form that thinks big" reflected their huge achievements often against a very challenging backdrop. We created a fresh and vibrant new identity and a conceptual 'prospectus' that told their story in a compelling visual and physical way, with the large format style.



PS Sixth. In tune with the students.

CLIENT

Prior's Field School | Surrey

PROJECT

Sixth Form Prospectus

SERVICES

Brand Development

Identity

Web design

Design for Print

Copywriting

Print production

Prior's Field Sixth form was losing out to competitor colleges because pupils at the independent Prior's Field Girls School that traditionally fed the Sixth Form, felt that the competing colleges were much 'cooler' and more appealing. Prior's Field Sixth needed to make changes to brand perception and communicate their difference to retain and grow pupil numbers.

We choose music and Apple products as the source of inspiration for the brand strap line and the style of the associated marketing material as we felt that this would truly resonate with the intended audience. We created a mini prospectus that was done to resemble an iPod classic along the positioning line "In Tune With You". It folded out and focussed the key differentials that we had identified.

We didn't feel a full blown prospectus would be a good use of resources or as well received. Instead, we focussed on what was most relevant in the mind of the pupils from the research undertaken and succinctly presented the information. We created document folders that were designed to look and feel like Apple laptops, creating the windows on the 'screen' to house key school statements. These were incredibly well received and used flexibly throughout the sixth form.



St John's. In their own words.

CLIENT

St John's School | Essex

PROJECT

Junior & Senior Prospectus'

SERVICES

Brand Strategy & Development
Identity
Web design
Design for Print
Advertising
Copywriting
Direct Mail
Print production

St John's is co-educational independent day school founded in 1928 with a long and proud history by offering their pupils a blend of academic excellence in a caring environment. The school was facing a decline in pupil numbers to larger, better known schools locally. This was predominantly due to its perception and lack of visibility in the local area. The Agency created a brand and marketing campaign to combat both issues head on.

The repositioning of the school built on its core ethos of nurturing happy, individual high achievers formed the cornerstone of a compelling and powerful campaign. The prospectus' were based on a testimonials book in the bursar's office spotted during one of our many visits to St John's. The book contained numerous emotional, heartfelt thankyou letters and postcards from both parents and pupils some of whom had a very challenging time before they attended the school. This was the diamond we always look for, and became the foundation of the powerful prospectus where the story of the school is told "In their own words".





the agency
for education

Inspired thinking. Outstanding creative. Exceptional results.

We are not 'just another design company'.

From strategic brand consultancy and marketing to compelling advertising campaigns that deliver results across all channels, we have the perfect blend of commercial acumen and creative genius to help you. Whatever it takes, we deliver – on budget, on time and always way above expectation.



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