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Starting a School Guide: 10-step Action Plan

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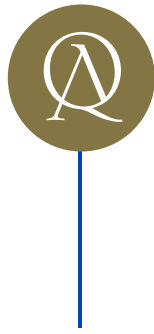
Education Consulting



Our guide

From the Business Plan to Policies & Procedures, we've put together this guide to help you have a good understanding of what it will take to grow a successful school.





10-step Action Plan

1. Define Your School Branding & Identity
2. Understand Legal & Operating Requirements
3. Prepare Your Business Plan & Budget
4. Structure Your Marketing & Recruitment Plans
5. Determine Your Facilities & Infrastructure
6. Hire the Right Staff & Plan Their Development
7. Tackle Your Funding & Financial Needs
8. Develop your Program & Curriculum
9. Describe Your School's Policies & Procedures
10. Establish Industry Relationships



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School Branding & Identity



Define Your School Branding & Identity

What do people think about when they hear the name of your school?

Does your School brand evoke as powerful images and feeling as major sneakers and cereal brands?

As educators and business owners, we know that identity is important in bringing a group together.

“The keys to brand success are self-definition, transparency, authenticity and accountability.”

– Simon Mainwaring



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Today, without a great brand that helps students and parents connect with your school, it's easy to get lost in the noise.

But forging that identity - and defining the values it represents - requires reflection and creativity.

A school brand and identity is about defining who you are and clearly communicating that definition to your staff, students, and community.

And it's about creating excellence through the clarity of your mission and what you stand for.

But also creating a brand that stands out and is remembered.

For these reasons, when undertaking a branding exercise or creating an identity package, it is important that stakeholders and user groups first define what a school's is about: Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision.

Based on these, the complete brand identity toolkit can be developed, including:

- School naming
- The logo and trademark
- Brand promise and Messaging
- Visual branding
- Brand personality - tone of voice
- Style guides or brand guidelines
- Brand implementation

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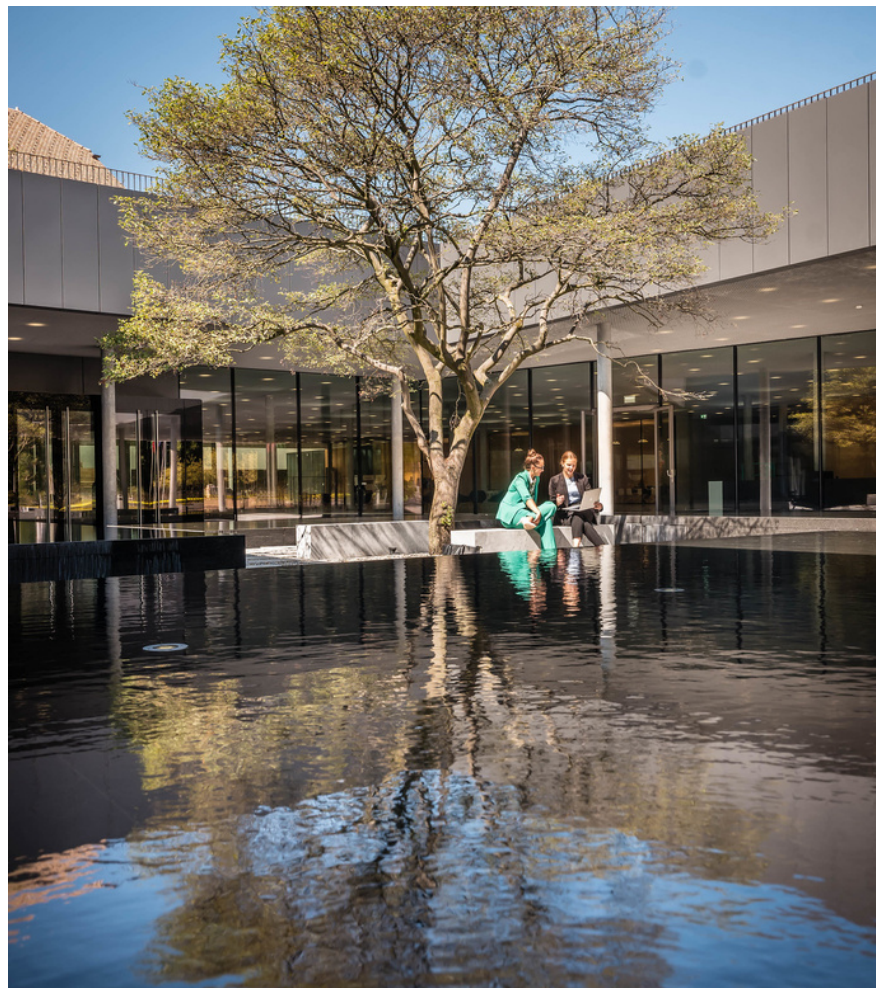
Legal &
Operating
Requirements



Understand Legal & Operating Requirements

Every country has its own process for registering and licensing schools, which is often determined by the type of school being opened. To determine whether the host country's education regulatory structure accommodates your expectations, it is important to understand how it handles each type of school.

When investing in education, understanding the governmental - Ministry of Education - requirements is an imperative first step.



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Ask yourself the right questions to determine the legal & operating requirements for your school project:

- Does your school have to be a non-profit, or can it be for-profit?
 - How long does it usually take for a license application to be approved, and what are the requirements?
 - Is your school going to be public or private?
 - How many local students can your school accept, and will they be allowed to enroll locally?
- Does a national curriculum have to be delivered in whole or in part, or can an international curriculum be used?
 - Can foreign teachers make up a certain percentage of the teaching staff? Have you checked the immigration law requirements?
 - Will your school's intellectual property be protected?
 - What are the accreditation bodies requirements?
 - What are the insurance requirements?
- Will you set up partnerships? What kind of contracts are most appropriate?
 - What are the legal requirements for facilities and buildings?
 - What are the health and safety laws for schools?

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Business Plan & Budget



Prepare Your Business Plan & Budget

Business plans and well-defined budgets are often mistaken for one another. The budget is an important component of a business plan, but a true business plan provides strategies and tactics beyond the projected income and expenses.

As part of the planning process, they help you identify goals and metrics and how you intend to achieve them.





The first step to opening a school is to have a plan that you are confident in before investing your time, energy, and money.

Any business venture carries risk - schools are no exception!

You can move forward with confidence if you have a plan.

Secondly, your plan can help others understand how you plan to make your vision a reality.

By building confidence in others, you can attract staff and secure financial support.

If you haven't written a business plan before, it may seem intimidating. Nevertheless, it serves as a road map for your new school and is a must-have.

The business plan will cover many topics, but it is mainly there to explain what you hope to accomplish with your school and how you will accomplish it.

Financial institutions and investors use business plans to determine whether they should invest in your school.

In contrast, budgets are primarily internal documents that keep track of income and expenses and help determine where money should be spent.

If you need new equipment, need to upgrade your infrastructure or want to give someone a raise, your budget can guide you through your decision and determine whether you have the funds to do so, or what steps you need to take.

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Marketing &
Recruitment
Plans



Structure Your Marketing & Recruitment Plans

The traditional sales and marketing tactics no longer work.

Connecting with prospect candidates and their key sponsors (parents or guardians) is one of the challenging tasks of the student recruitment and marketing departments.

Here's the thing, an applicant isn't following the traditional "marketing to sales to customer" funnel.

Instead, each individual prospect follows a unique path.





That is why, your marketing and sales teams, need to be in tight alignment, because your prospect needs to be communicated with, and sold to, wherever and whenever she wants.

To find scalable growth, it's critical your marketing team communicate all the information they have about a prospect to your recruitment and admission team before they even get on the phone.

To cut through the competition and recruit the students your institution needs to continue to thrive, a solid student recruitment plan is imperative.

Your plan should detail your recruitment objectives and the strategies (including marketing, communication and sales) you'll put in place to achieve them.

It is determined by your institution's vision as well as data from previous recruitment cycles - if available. It also includes references to the tools you will use to implement your plan and details of how you are going to measure success.

You will also need the right technology: a digital toolkit that will enable you to execute your finely tuned plan.



To get you started, here's an overview of the main aspects to consider when approaching your plan.

- Analyze target audiences and establish target persona
- Identify your audiences' consumer journey and define the desired experience during the entire lifecycle
- Conduct competitive research online and define sell-against messages

- Optimize the Unique Selling Points for your school
- Establish your recruitment goals
- Create a marketing and communication plan
- Build awareness by understanding both outbound and inbound marketing
- Nurture your prospects with the right Marketing platforms and tools (connect your CMS to your CRM)

- Review applications / registrations / enrollment and accompany your student until their first day on campus
- Analyze your data and adjust your plan

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Facilities & Infrastructure



Determine Your Facilities & Infrastructure

A learning center should be a perfect playground for the students to make as many mistakes as possible and learn from them before going to work in the industry. This is why we need to give them an environment that is a state of the art, to learn the best industry practices.

The academic and functional success of any institution is heavily impacted by the atmosphere and physical makeup of its facilities.

Planners of schools have long struggled to find an answer to the dilemma of how to design school facilities that are conducive to teaching and learning in the most effective manner.





The dilemma of designing school facilities that enhance teaching and learning has long plagued school planners.

This requires a very clear vision of the present situation, of the expectations of all stakeholders, and of the best feasible route to satisfy these expectations.

Students devote the majority of their waking hours at school to academic pursuits and other activities required for graduation.

It is the responsibility of educational institutions to concentrate on the physical facilities and to provide an infrastructure that not only fosters academic growth but also pays attention to the emotional and physiological well-being of the students.

For these reasons, education institutions should not ignore these important requirements:

- Location
- Size
- Class size and density
- Types of buildings and spaces
- Equipment
- Technology
- Interior space design
- Legal requirements
- Safety, comfort and security

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Staff Hiring &
Development
Plan



Hire the Right Staff & Plan Their Development

In educational institutions, there are many people who contribute to successfully imparting education to students. You will need a combination of academic as well as non-academic workers.

Every staff member has to play their part and contribute to your school culture. But, how to identify your staffing needs? And how to attract the right talents?

“Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow”
- William Pollard





You should start by identifying and understanding your staffing needs.

Establishing a manpower framework based on key assumptions including the forecast of student numbers, the staffing ratio and upcoming projects is always a good first step.

Make sure to integrate it in your yearly financial plan and establish recruitment and hiring guidelines to direct you through the next steps of the staffing process.

Your school's long-term success depends largely on finding and hiring the right staff.

Make sure you differentiate between Talent Acquisition and Recruitment, as they each have their own benefits and disadvantages.

The goal of talent acquisition is to find specialists, leaders, or future executives for your company.

The best and brightest employees don't just come to your company once.

Networking and building relationships with top talent is a continuous process.

While talent management is key, recruiting remains an important activity to fill vacancies in the short term.



Regardless of your immediate needs or strategy, here are three fundamentals you should know:

- Maintaining a healthy working environment and building a strong company culture will improve brand recognition in the long run.

- Tracking your progress, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as keeping track of the data you have gathered along the way, using various tools to stay informed.
- Organizing the hiring process meticulously, with each step being prioritized.

Furthermore, do not disregard talent retention. It largely relies on the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of your staff and faculty.

Last but not least, ensure that your staff and faculty have access to training and development.

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Funding & Financial Needs



Tackle Your Funding & Financial Needs

The most challenging aspect of opening a new school is finding funding.

Budgeting is important for both income and expenses, but when school owners prepare to open, it is the income side of the balance sheet that typically causes the most stress.

Can you tell what kind of funding your school will need? Why is that? What are the sources of funding for initial and ongoing projects? Is there anything you'll need to have in place in terms of basic finance resources?





There are many types of funding you can consider for your school:

- Personal Funds
- Grants
- Government Resources
- Banks & Institutional Loans
- Third-Party Lenders
- Equity Partners
- Venture Capital / Seed Funding Organizations

As soon as you launch your school, tuition is by far the most common, and most obvious, source of recurring revenue.

Your school can also receive recurring funding by involving the community, for example through sponsorships.

Usually, schools funding deals are structured in one of four ways:

- Direct Investment
- Franchise
- Co-operation Agreement
- Management Fee

Explore ways in which your school may be able to offer discounts or scholarships for families.

Of course, you should not neglect some basics of finance:

- **Banking:** Choose the adequate institution and set-up.
- **Accountants:** Hire or partner with an expert within your country.
- **Accounting Software:** It will help you keep track and assessing the financial health of your school.

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Program &
Curriculum



Develop your Program & Curriculum

Before you start designing your program and courses, here are, a few essential questions you should be asking yourself:

- What is your school focus?
- What grade levels will your school deliver?
- What is your school teaching strategy or philosophy?
- What standard "Must Include" topics & courses should your school comply with?
- What subjects should your school comply with?
- What teaching & learning space needs are you creating?

An effective education curriculum is the one that is able to prepare students for the careers of the future and to be employable immediately upon graduation. It is imperative for educators to have a constant dialogue in order to adapt and upgrade the curriculum to address the future needs of the industry.



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A well-designed curriculum, course, or program can make a significant difference to a student's learning experience. Designing a good program or course is an iterative process, not a one-off event. The first step is to test an initial design with diverse student groups, and then adapt it based on students' feedback and learning.

The difference between curriculum design and instructional design is that curriculum design focuses more on the big picture, whereas instructional design focuses more on the specific decisions regarding course materials and interactions.

Curriculum design is primarily concerned with aligning learning strategies, materials, and experiences to defined outcomes.

As a result, good curriculum should be results-driven and efficient. Curriculum designers determine the scope of a project using tools such as learner personas, needs analyses, and existing assessment data.

For learners to achieve the desired outcomes, it becomes vital to provide them with learning strategies tailored to their characteristics.

The classroom experience works best when it reflects students' normal social interactions. Therefore, it is important to focus on being student centric by offering digital interaction, which delivers higher student engagement and greater understanding of complex ideas.

Learning institutions should strive to create a learning environment that best fits students' interests, by leveraging technology & interactive resources.

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Policies &
Procedures

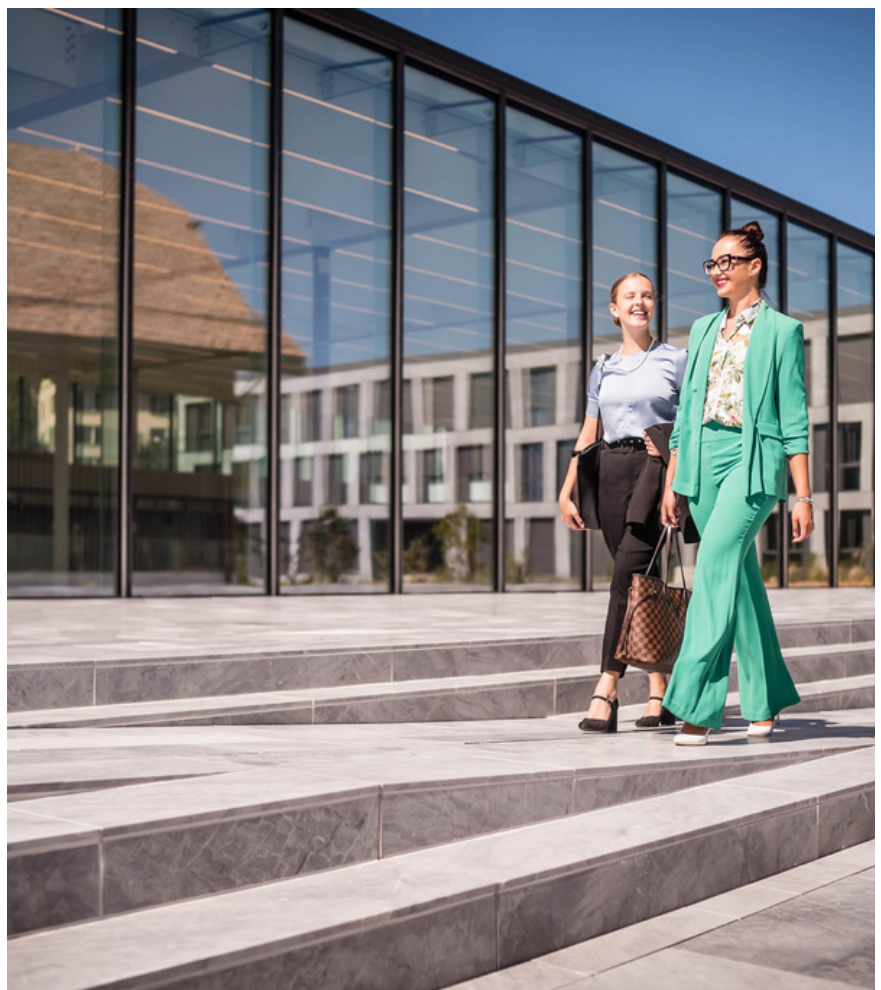


Describe Your School's Policies & Procedures

There is a large variety of roles and functions involved in schools and other education settings. Schools need clear procedures, structures, and expectations to ensure that students can learn and thrive.

How can you get started, and what do you need?

Guidelines for your school's operation are outlined in your bylaws, policies, and procedures.





Documenting your school's policies and procedures - and sharing them with students, parents, and staff - helps you avoid confusion, conflicts, and even lawsuits.

The policies and procedures of the school cover all aspects of its operations.

Based on the subject, they can be directed at students, parents, staff, and governors.

Students and employees benefit from policies which ensure that values are consistently applied and expectations are clearly defined.

It is the staff's responsibility to understand and follow the school's policies.

School policies generally serve the following purposes:

- Provide a safe and productive working environment for students and staff.
- Establish clear communication with staff, parents, and governors about your school's core values and principles.
- Provide staff with the tools they need to do their jobs well.

- Encourage prospective parents, students, staff, and governors to join your school.
- Develop rules, regulations, and procedures for the school to ensure smooth operation.
- Provide consistency in key areas of school life, such as behavior.

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Industry Relationships



Establish Industry Relationships

University or school heads are responsible for ensuring the best possible life outcomes for their students.

This can be achieved through the combination of various strategies that a school can put in place depending on its market, community, industry and students.

In order to ensure graduates' employability, educators need to continuously innovate in the way they gather and apply insights from the field. Preparing students for fast-paced change in the real world means constant, fast-paced changes to the education syllabus.





The goal of partnerships is to create mutually beneficial relationships between students, faculty, education stakeholders, and companies.

Creating innovative career pathways, cultivating research and commercialization activities, and sparking interest in industry are all possible through student-industry partnerships.

Whether formal or informal, these partnerships enable all educational stakeholders to benefit from sharing their knowledge, experience, and resources, thereby improving student outcomes.

Here are some example of partnerships you might want to consider:

- Dual and joint degrees collaborations
- Exchange programs
- Visiting student programs
- Summer programs
- Certificate programs
- Micro-credentials
- Research partnerships
- Shared events or conferences
- Funding / grants
- Idea labs and workshops
- Student consulting mandates
- Business incubator
- Internship programs

In order to determine whether a partnership with an organization is right for you, you should review your current financial and academic situation.

1. Define your goals
2. Define the benefit to the partner
3. Start with businesses within your network first
4. Set a location to foster interactions
5. Define roles and responsibilities

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Sources, references
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