







Sprint Education 

The 2026 Schools Marketing Guide

11 tactics that help education brands break through, build trust, and win big in schools.



 Daniel Cooper	Head of Science	Kings Norton Boys' School		<input type="checkbox"/>
 Lucy Bennett	Assistant Headteacher	George Heriot's School		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 James Holloway	Year 5 Class Teacher	Westdene Primary School		<input type="checkbox"/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I co-founded Sprint Education back in 2007 with a mission to transform how brands connect with schools. Today we're the world's leading education agency that creates over 48,000,000 connections between schools and education brands each year.

Over the years I've seen first-hand what works when it comes to marketing to schools, but over the past 18-months I've witnessed a shift in the landscape on a seismic level.

Where proven strategies once flourished, results have faltered. However, as is ever the case with marketing evolutions, we've developed and tested new tactics that have bucked the trend, generating results on a scale not seen in recent years.

In this report I will share with you **11 of these tactics**. These are for you to implement and sharpen your approach to schools marketing this year. Each tactic is simple to follow and implement, and should give your marketing to schools the boost it needs.

Let's get started!

Ben Lewis

CEO & Co-Founder - Sprint Education





It's Monday...

You press send on your latest “back to school” campaign. It’s beautifully written, the design is pristine, the offer is irresistible (you think). So you sit back, and wait.

Nothing happens. You refresh your inbox.

Still nothing.

By Wednesday, you’ve had a couple of unsubscribes and a few out-of-office replies.

By Friday, you tell yourself, “Schools just aren’t buying right now!”



**“Schools just aren’t
buying right now!”**

BUT HERE'S THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH

Schools are buying

Just not from brands that feel unfamiliar, noisy, or risky. And this is where most marketing to schools quietly breaks down.



The real problem no one wants to admit is that your marketing to schools isn't struggling because staff inboxes are full, their social media feeds are flooded with slop, schools hate suppliers, or that budgets are impossible to win.

It can seem like a struggle because schools have built extremely good defences making it harder for education businesses to connect with them, whilst at the same time, the quality of marketing sent to schools has dramatically fallen over the past 18 months, with the rise of AI and automation systems.

In today's marketing to schools world the tactics that work the best also appear a bit odd. They're quieter, slower, more human. And sometimes they don't look like marketing at all.



**The tactics
that work
the best, will
also appear
a bit odd!**



Volume is no longer an advantage. Precision, patience, and relevance are.



The organisations that will succeed this year are the ones that understand school buying behaviour has evolved, decision-making is slower, budgets are scrutinised more, and there is far less tolerance for substandard schools marketing.

In this environment, volume is no longer an advantage. Precision, patience, and relevance are.

This ebook explores the most effective tactics education businesses should be considering, and in many cases re-learning, to generate momentum.

Some of these approaches are cutting-edge, shaped by how school inboxes, filters, and behaviours now operate. Others are surprisingly old-school, resurfacing because they align better with how educators actually engage and buy.

What they all have in common is a focus on breaking down barriers, reaching the right school staff at the right time, and building enough trust to earn a place in schools' highly protected budgets.

Used together, these tactics don't just create short-term spikes in interest, they build the consistency and credibility needed to make this year a successful one for your education business.





EXCITING BRANDS ARE EVERYWHERE, BUT IT'S THE...

Reliable brands that get bought!

Schools are not looking for:

- Game-changing solutions
- Revolutionary edtech
- Disruptive innovation

They are looking for:

- Something another school already uses
- Something that won't explode their budget
- Something that is easy to adopt/train staff on

The brands that win use language like:

- "Used by schools like yours"
- "No extra admin" / "No training required"
- "Low-risk, proven, sensible"

If it's not sexy, to schools it becomes more purchasable!



TACTIC #1

Be boring on purpose, schools respect boring



TACTIC #2

Stop chasing Head Teachers/CEOs

They are too busy running schools.

Head Teachers and CEOs want less disruption and fewer distractions. Sometimes it's unavoidable, but if you can, move away from this over-targeted audience, consider targeting:

- Deputy or Assistant Head Teachers
- Heads of Department/Subjects
- Pastoral Leads
- SENCOs
- Business Managers (the true gatekeeper of the budget)
- Subject staff (the influencers and often those that benefit the most from your service)

Remember that influence flows upwards in schools far more than people realise. Aim to win internal advocates first, and budgets will follow later.





Schools don't buy when they receive your email.

They buy when...

- Budgets reset
- Ofsted pressure eases
- A problem becomes unavoidable
- A school leader says “we need to fix this”

Effective strategies:

- Appear regularly before buying moments
- Respect the school calendar
- Understand term pressures
- Avoid peak stress weeks unless essential

If your marketing understands school rhythm it feels respectful, and gets remembered.



TACTIC #3

Use timing
like a **weapon**
(not an
afterthought)

TACTIC #4

Boost email deliverability by 28%

This'll take you outside of your comfort zone

Don't track your emails! Not only do schools hate being "watched", but email tracking code can trigger more filter systems and reduce deliverability by up to 28%!

The irony is, the emails that perform the best tend to be the one you can't fully measure. Therefore, your priority should be:

- Replies over opens
- Conversations over clicks
- Sales over stats

Here at Sprint Education, we take an inbox placement first approach to our clients' campaigns. Each client has a choice to "turn off" tracking (which is what we advise).

We do this because ultimately, replies, conversations, and sales are more important to a business's future, and survival, than a vanity fuelled analytics dashboard.





They didn't see it the first time!

No, schools aren't just ignoring you, they are often just too busy.

Educators and school staff

- Scan emails quickly
- Miss things (particularly content positioned below the fold)
- Forget who you are
- Remember you later (at convenient times)

The brands that win:

- Say the same thing, politely, over time
- Keep messages consistent, but interesting
- Don't panic after one send

Repetition builds familiarity, familiarity builds trust, trust unlocks budgets.



TACTIC #5

Repeat yourself

TACTIC #6

**Admit it, you're
not right for
everyone!**



Trying to appeal to all schools
**is a fast route to
appealing to none.**

High-performing messages often include:

- Clear exclusions
- Honest boundaries
- Statements like, “this won’t suit every school”

This produces counter-intuitive results, where schools lean in.
Why? Because honesty feels rare, and therefore valuable.





The goal of schools marketing is not, 'they buy immediately', it's:

“Oh yeah, I’ve heard of them...”

That moment:

- Shortens sales cycles
- Softens scepticism
- Lowers risk perception

This is why **consistent, low-pressure visibility** beats one heroic campaign every term!



TACTIC #7

**Build “oh
yeah, them”
recognition**

TACTIC #8

Design for replies, not clicks



Clicks are nice. Replies are better!

Ask yourself...

- Does this email give them a reason to reply?
- Is replying easier than clicking?
- Does it feel safe to respond?

Schools reply when:

- There's little to no commitment implied
- The question is simple
- The tone is human

An example of a high performing CTA in school marketing is:

“Would it be useful if I sent more info?”





Trust beats tracking every time!

Resending to unopens was never especially efficient.

In fact, Sprint Education has often advised our clients against taking this approach. But now, modern email tracking has made this strategy fundamentally flawed.

Automated bots now create false opens, while Apple and Google suppress real ones (hiding their users' opens from your email tracking reports).

Those school staff that have already read your message feel bombarded, whilst those who genuinely missed it are often excluded from the resend entirely.

It's counter-intuitive, inefficient, and best left behind.



TACTIC #9

Stop sending to "unopens"





TACTIC #10

Make it easy for schools to say “not now”

It sounds backwards but it works.

Schools are far more likely to reply when they feel:

- No pressure
- No expectations
- No awkward follow-up if the timing is wrong

Messages to schools that acknowledge reality perform better, for example: **“If this isn’t a priority this term, no problem, please let me know.”**

Why this works:

- It removes fear of being chased
- It shows respect for school pressures
- It opens the door for future engagement

Remember, your goal should be to instigate a conversation.

Even a “no thank you, not right now” is valuable.

From this you can learn a school’s buying position, when they might be ready to explore options next, and ultimately lay the foundations to a fruitful sales conversation later on in the academic year.



Here is an uncomfortable truth for marketers:

A lot of school buying decisions happen after your email, after your call, or after your campaign has “ended”.

Your name comes up in:

- Internal conversations
- Budget meetings
- “We’ve heard of them” moments

Which is why:

- Consistency beats spikes
- Familiarity beats brilliance
- Long-term visibility beats short-term metrics

Marketing to schools is often about planting the seeds you don’t see immediately grow, and trusting in the process.



TACTIC #11

Accept that most of your success happens off-stage





What the smartest education marketers quietly changed

The organisations generating the strongest results didn't suddenly get better copywriters or bigger budgets. They changed how they show up.

Instead of constant loud campaigns, they drip-feed low-pressure messages that look and feel personal, they focus on replies, not clicks, they send helpful content with end-user payoff, they accept that schools warm up over time, not instantly.

Instead of chasing every school, they target specific roles, using Sprint Education's database of educators, segmentable by 1,400 roles and levels of seniority.

Instead of "tracking everything", they prioritise inbox placement, conversations are their metric of success.

High performing brands now even split their activity, with quiet, always-on relationship emails in the background interspersed with occasional perfectly-timed bold campaigns.

This split-activity approach is evident in Sprint Education's service. We don't build a sequence of emails: we create a patient, always-on sales and marketing team for our clients, tirelessly prospecting key schools, whilst supporting this with a calm, brand-building marketing engine.

Schools don't want to be sold to. They want to feel understood, safe, and confident they won't regret their decision. That's why familiar names get replies, calm brands feel lower risk, and consistent visibility outperforms one-off brilliance every time.

It's also why reliable education data and an education-dedicated broadcasting environment matter far more than scatter-gun marketing at volume. This is the edge that Sprint Education can bring to your next campaign.

If you'd like to learn more about our education marketing data and solutions, book a free strategy call with an education experts today.

[Book a free strategy call here >](#)



4.9 Stars
★★★★★
Based on 90 reviews
Google Reviews

Impero

BBC
BITESIZE

CARDIFF
UNIVERSITY

BBC
Proms

Adobe

bbfc

YOUNG
enterprise

Qualzy

OPTIMUS EDUCATION

ABSOLUTE
PLAY

YouGov

CrickSoftware

Thank you for reading

Speak to one of our education experts about how we can help today!

E: info@sprint-education.com

W: sprint-education.com

Sprint Education 

