

## **Abdulaziz Abdulla: An Action Plan for the BC Muslim School**

### **PART 2: MARKETING PLAN**

#### **11.0 THE MARKET**

BCMS' target market is Muslim families who live in the Vancouver and Richmond areas.

#### **11.1 Competitor Analysis**

##### **11.1.1 Indirect Competitors**

Public schools in Richmond and Vancouver areas are considered to be BCMS' indirect competitors. These schools exceed BCMS' capacities and capabilities in their level of resources, facilities, and academic programs. Therefore, Muslim families whose priority is educational excellence and opportunity choose public schools over BCMS.

##### **11.1.2 Direct Competitors**

The Iqra' School of Surrey, BC is BCMS' only direct competitor in the Vancouver area. This school targets Sunni Muslims living in the Surrey area. It offers KG-8 services and adds a new grade level every year. In the last 3 years it has established a very good reputation, and its student base **appears to be strong and steadily growing**. The Iqra' school has therefore become a major competitor for BCMS.

#### **11.2 Implications for BC Muslim School**

BCMS strives to differentiate itself by its service, its staff's knowledge, and its quality of education. The Competitor Framework/Matrix (attached with the Appendices) clearly indicates that Iqra' emphasizes these same qualities.

#### **11.3 MARKET ANALYSIS**

BCMS' primary market consists of male and female Sunni Muslims, from age 5-15.

Unfortunately, at present most BCMS students come from low-income families.

##### **11.3.1 Target Markets**

According to Statistics Canada, over 56,000 Muslims live in the Vancouver area, and 4,950 of them live in Richmond. .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/Details/details1rel.cfm?SEARCH=BEGINS&ID=14573&PSGC=59&SGC=965915063&DataType=1&LANG=E&Province=59&PlaceName=Richmond&CMA=&CSDN>

Obviously, not all of the families in this segment are interested in independent Islamic schools and not all of them are Sunni Muslims. Additionally, many of these families do not have members in the targeted age group.

### **11.3.2 Market Characteristics**

Generally, Muslims enroll their children in Muslim schools to preserve and pass on their Islamic identity and culture, as well as to fulfill a spiritual obligation. They also experience a sense of integrity in financially contributing to a religious and cultural endeavor.

### **11.3.3 Market Segment**

BCMS' primary target market is 5-15 year old males and females.

### **11.3.4 Implications of the Market Analysis for BCMS**

There is substantial opportunity for BCMS to strengthen its reputation in the Richmond and Greater Vancouver areas and to recruit enough additional students to achieve its target number. Recruitment opportunities will be enhanced as the Muslim community becomes more aware of the quality of educational services and benefits that BCMS offers. Greater awareness as regards the importance of preserving the Islamic and Muslim identities will further assist recruitment efforts.

## **12.0 MARKETING PLAN**

### **12.1 Market Position Objectives**

The new marketing strategy aims to position the BC Muslim School (BCMS) as the province's premier Muslim educational institution. BCMS' strategy is aimed at Sunni Muslim families who believe in the need to promote and preserve their religion and culture within the context of Canada's diverse society. The school needs to emphasize the following: its interdisciplinary program; its Islamic Studies program; its technology and language curriculums; its physical education activities; the importance of the Islamic environment; and the excellent academic standards **achieved (upheld)** by its

knowledgeable staff. The integration of **the character development education and new technology programs (character development and technology programs)** into its curricula will support BCMS' need to promote itself as a unique institution in comparison **to other schools.**

## **12.2 Market Objectives**

BCMS' new strategies aim to distinguish its character and services from those of its competitors. BCMS will upgrade and reform its system in order to embrace the new strategies. To sustain its economy, BCMS will seek to establish articulation agreements with overseas partners and thereby offer Canadian education to international students. Locally, BCMS management will exert every possible effort to utilize school facilities and resources in small business ventures that create new revenue streams. Over the next five years, BCMS realistically expects the implementation of its new strategies to achieve the following financial goals and objectives:

### **12.2.1 Financial Objectives**

- Achieve break-even each year.
- Create new revenue streams to diversify BCMS' financial portfolio.
- Increase enrollment and reduce students' drop-out rate.
- Maintain steady growth each year.

### **12.2.2 Financial Goals**

- Retain the existing number of students
- Increase new enrollment by 5% annually.
- Generate \$120,000 annually through business activities.
- Increase total revenue by 5% annually.

## **12.3 Product Mix Strategies**

To improve and extend its services, and as part of adopting its new strategies, BCMS will promote the following new characteristics as integral to the achievement of excellence in its academic environment:

### **12.3.1 Adaptability**

As BCMS advances its education system, its technology, and its philosophy of educational methodology, the school administration will be ready to adopt positive changes. It will stand at the forefront of these advances, continuously evolving and improving, and never becoming complacent.

### **12.3.2 Excellence**

BCMS' commitment to quality will remain as strong as ever. It will continue to recruit the most promising students, teachers and administrative staff, and provide them with the resources **they need** to excel. To ensure higher levels of achievement, both teachers and students will sign performance accountability contracts to demonstrate their commitment to excellence. Their achievements will testify to BCMS' success as an institution.

### **12.3.3 Flexibility**

Regardless of whether its needs are financial or academic, BCMS will recognize the uniqueness of individuals and programs, and will value the counsel of its constituents in eliminating organizational obstacles on the path to excellence.

### **12.3.4 Collaboration**

BCMS will continually encourage family involvement in all aspects of school life. Administrators and teaching staff will work together with parents and students to augment students' accomplishments.

### **12.3.5 Creativity**

BCMS will seek alternatives **ways** to meet the challenge of resource constraints. When confronted with limitations, the school will employ financial, personnel, and Muslim community resources to fulfill its mission and vision.

## **12.4 Placement-Mix Strategies**

BCMS will continue to exploit its well-established Richmond location in marketing its educational services.

### **12.4.1 Online**

Parents and students can access BCMS' website in order to obtain information, register, and communicate with the teaching staff and school administration. In addition, parents will be able to access their children's academic reports and teachers and administrative staff will update students' academic profiles on a monthly basis.

### **12.4.2 Offshore Partners**

BCMS will establish connections with offshore partners in order to offer the Islamic Canadian model of education to international Muslim students. This will generate royalties for BCMS and allow it to offer a student exchange program, thereby adding diversity to both its student body and its financial portfolio.

## **12.5 Pricing Strategy**

BCMS is facing financial difficulties. The school receives **fifty (50%)** percent of its operational budget from the Ministry of Education, and tuition fees cover an additional 28%. Therefore, the school continually operates at a budget deficit of about 22%.

BCMS' tuition fees are overly modest given the high quality of the school's services, but raising them is not a feasible option. Although Muslim parents who enroll their children in the school know that their money contributes to a good cause, the school's past experience has shown that pricing and payment policies **are deciding factors that caused further migration of students (are decisive factors in the migration of students OR I PREFER: are decisive factors that can deter enrolment.)** In this regard it is also important to consider that most of the Muslim families which have children attending BCMS fall within the low-income category. The school management therefore

cannot compensate for the budget deficit by increasing tuition fees, and instead must aggressively pursue new revenue streams.

## **12.6 Promotional Strategy Mix**

### **12.6.1 Advertising Objective**

The promotion campaign for BCMS will focus on raising awareness regarding a number of the school's attributes: its unique services; its Islamic atmosphere; its well-rounded Canadian curriculum; its Islamic studies; its character education; and its qualified staff, who employ the most current philosophy of educational methodology. The objective of advertising is to promote B.C. Muslim School as the province's premier educational institution for Muslim children, enhance BCMS stakeholders' loyalty through the promotion of its exemplary services, and attract new students.

### **12.6.2 Advertising Budget**

As the B.C. Muslim School has limited funds, the maximum budget allocated for advertising this year is **\$500**. To maximize the promotional outcomes, an inexpensive but effective buzz marketing mechanism will be employed.

### **12.6.3 Concept Statement Development**

The primary focus of the marketing message will be to inform parents that the Islamic environment at BCMS is very important in regard to helping students develop **their (a)** religious and cultural character at an early age. The secondary message will be that BCMS offers much more than just educational activities, and appeal to parents by promoting **value-added programs** such as: character development; music; art; technology training; and extra-curricular sports.

**Rational:** B.C Muslim School's strong infrastructure **offers (supports comprehensive)** B.C. and Islamic curriculums as well as Character Development Education **in preparing** students to be future leaders; a top quality teaching staff ensures the best educational outcomes.

**Sensory:** B.C. Muslim School facilities are well equipped and safe, and its environment is pleasant and welcoming.

**Social:** B.C. Muslim School instills Islamic values in Muslim children, serving a religious and social purpose.

**Emotional:** Parents will feel safe and please Allah by raising their children in an Islamic way.

### **12.7 Promotional Vehicle**

Promoting BCMS will focus on increasing parents' awareness of the importance of raising Muslim children in an Islamic atmosphere. It will emphasize the unique aspects of this environment as well as BCMS' distinct programs and services.

#### **12.7.1 Internet Website:**

BCMS will introduce a new website, which will function as a vehicle to announce upcoming events and as an effective, easy communication system with parents. It will feature educational and cultural seminars as well as a question and answer section. The website will reflect BCMS' commitment, mission, and vision. It will be utilized in a manner that enhances the institution's image through offering announcements about the new strategies; information about services; news of upcoming social and educational events; awareness seminars; and tips for parents as regards how to help their children. As such, it will facilitate consistency in the school and home environments and strengthen the school's relationship with parents.

#### **12.7.2 eNewsletter:**

B.C. Muslim School will post the monthly eNewsletter on its website and notify parents when the most recent one is ready to access. The newsletter will contain educational features written by professionals, articles about topics such as students' monthly 'enhanced' report card, and information about social events. It will also feature a guest writer each month—perhaps a Muslim scholar or a Muslim student enrolled in a Journalism program.

#### **12.7.3 Educational Tradeshow:**

The B.C Muslim School will select a staff representative and a student to send to Middle East Education Shows. This will allow the school to promote its educational services and residency in an international forum. The exposure it gains is expected to attract international students and facilitate academic affiliation agreements with international

partners. BCMS can market its Canadian educational services through these partners, thereby opening a new avenue of financial resources.

#### **12.7.4 Speaker Series:**

The B.C Muslim School will sponsor a monthly speaker series which will feature talks on topics such as: education; character development; parents' responsibilities towards their children; and the importance of the Muslim schools.

#### **12.7.5 Brochures and Pamphlets:**

Posters and brochures will be designed and produced by students in Art classes and will be displayed in the school as well as city Mosques and Islamic Centers.

### **13.0 FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY AND FORECASTS**

#### **13.1 Financial Target**

Based on BCMS' financial records for the past 5 years, the recommended **new tuition fee (tuition fee increase?)** for 0-6 graders is \$000 – based on a minimum of 000 students (see appendices for the Pro-forma Income Statement).