

UPDATED FOR
2026

VAT

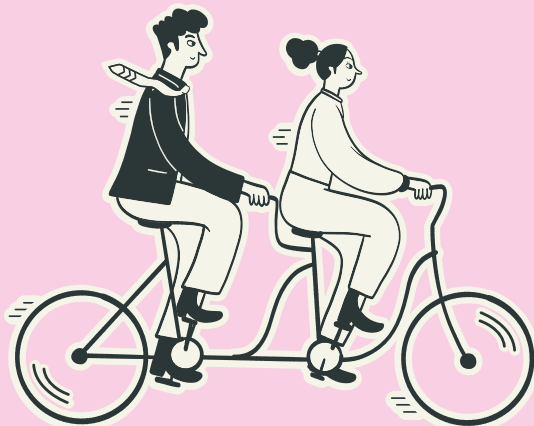
SURVIVAL GUIDE



MOVE ~~THE~~ MINDS

SHIFT PERCEPTIONS

We bring strategy and creativity
together in tandem to create
perception-shifting brands.



CONNECTION SHAPES CHOICE

Dive in and discover our 12 strategies for how to best articulate your school's unique culture and proposition and ensure that every interaction leaves a lasting impression.

With the addition of VAT to school fees, the cost of an already substantial investment in a child's future could rise considerably, making the decision all the more weighty.

In this guide, we'll unveil our 12 handy strategies designed to help your school's marketing efforts.

From crafting unforgettable experiences to leveraging emotional connections, these actionable insights will help your school to stand out in a crowded and somewhat uncertain market.

READY TO BUILD YOUR CONNECTIONS?

Visit quantock.com/schools to get started.



WHAT IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide supports leaders making decisions about how their organisation shows up and how it is experienced.

It is not a checklist, but a set of principles to return to when priorities compete, and clarity begins to blur. Used together, they help schools communicate with confidence and credibility.

1. START WITH CLARITY

Connection starts with understanding.

Before thinking about messaging, campaigns or design, strong brands invest time in answering a small number of important questions: **What do you do? How do you exist? Why do you exist?**

In education, **that why matters.** It shapes trust, confidence and long-term choice. Clarity comes from understanding who you are here for, what you stand for and the difference you aim to make.

Because without a clear sense of why you exist, even strong offers can sound generic.

When the why is clear, decisions become easier, and communication feels consistent.

This is where a lasting connection begins.

QUANTOCK TIP

If your answers to What, How and Why could apply to most organisations, keep refining.



OFFICE EXERCISE

Gather a small group of leadership, admissions, marketing and one or two people who speak to families regularly for a 90-minute insight session.

1. WHAT

Ask the group to describe what the organisation does in one simple sentence.

2. HOW

What makes you distinctive in the way you operate? Focus on specifics, not claims.

3. WHY

What difference do you exist to make beyond outcomes or results?

2. UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE PROPERLY

Demographics tell you who someone is. They don't tell you why they choose.

Staying close to your audience through research and conversations keeps communication relevant, grounded and believable.

Understanding what people care about, pressures they feel and how education fits into their lives helps communication feel relevant rather than generic.

Parents, pupils and staff all bring emotion into decision-making. Often a lot of it. Frequently, while juggling work, life and a rapidly cooling cup of tea.

Messages land more effectively because they reflect real concerns rather than assumptions.



AUDIENCES CHANGE. ASSUMPTIONS AGE.

Understanding values, motivations and pressures keeps communication relevant. Millennial parents, in particular, are motivated by trust, wellbeing and alignment, not just outcomes.



3. LEAD WITH PURPOSE

Purpose guides decisions when choices are unclear.

A clear purpose helps organisations decide what to prioritise, how to behave and where to focus energy.

It should be easy for staff to recognise and explain, and visible in everyday decisions rather than reserved for formal documents.

Purpose works best when it feels familiar and believable. If it only appears in strategy decks, it is unlikely to shape a parent's experience.

DID YOU KNOW?

Consumers are up to **6x more likely to purchase**, protect and champion purpose-driven companies



4. COMMUNICATE WITH HUMANITY

People connect with brands that feel human and they can relate to.

In practice, this means communication that is clear, warm and grounded in real experience, with language that feels accessible and a tone that stays consistent across every touchpoint.

Effective communication focuses less on perfection and more on reality. Describe a wet Tuesday in November. A challenging moment. A sense of support when reassurance matters.

Emotion helps people remember. Clarity helps them trust.

QUICK CHECK:

Read your last piece of communication. Does it describe real life or ideal life?



5. LOOK BEYOND VISUAL IDENTITY

A strong brand is more than a logo, colours or typography.

Those elements help people recognise you, but they do not explain why you matter.

Lasting connection comes from emotional equity. How people feel about you. What they associate with you. What they expect from every interaction.

Visual identity opens the door. Emotional connection keeps people inside.



VISUAL EQUITY

Logo

Colours

Typography

Imagery

Desing System

VS

EMOTIONAL EQUITY

Brand Pillars

Brand Personality

Tone Of Voice

Style Of Imagery

Brand Delivery

6. SELL THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE, NOT JUST THE OFFER

In education, parents are never choosing a single product.

They are choosing an experience that touches many parts of life.

Academic outcomes matter, but so do wellbeing, belonging, confidence, relationships and future opportunity. Families are weighing all of this, often subconsciously.

Brands that acknowledge the full reality of the experience feel more honest, more relevant and more reassuring.



YOU NEED TO SELL...

Academic Education

Character Development

Mental Well-being

Health & Fitness

Socialising

Career Development

Enrichment & Travel

Childcare

Accommodation

Cuisine!

**PEOPLE
CHOOSE FEELING,
NOT PRODUCTS.**

Beyond academics, what do families gain by choosing you? If it matters in real life, it should show up in your messaging.

7. DESIGN FOR THE RIGHT FEELING AT EACH STAGE

Families do not decide on a school all at once.

First, they need to understand. At this stage, clarity matters. Who you are, what you offer and how the school works need to feel easy to grasp and reassuring.

As they move closer, feeling takes over. Trust, belonging and emotional alignment begin to shape preference. This is where tone, stories and lived experience matter most.

Only then are families ready to decide. At this point, reassurance is key. They want to feel confident they are making the right choice for their child.

Strong schools design communication with this journey in mind. They support understanding, build emotional confidence and make decisions feel safe and considered.

PEOPLE THINK, THEN FEEL, THEN DECIDE.

Which stage are most of your communications designed for? Are you supporting thinking, feeling or decision?



8. MAKE YOUR BRAND FEEL FAMILIAR

People prefer brands they recognise, relate to and feel comfortable with.

This comes from a clear personality, a consistent tone of voice and behaviour that feels predictable in a good way. Over time, the brand starts to feel familiar, even trusted.

That familiarity is built through repetition and reliability. Seeing the same values expressed in different places, hearing the same tone used by different people, and having expectations consistently met.

Small moments add up, making people feel at ease, understood and more willing to engage with you.

When a brand feels like a reliable presence rather than a distant institution, connection strengthens.

**FAMILIARITY
BUILDS COMFORT.
COMFORT BUILDS TRUST.**

*If someone interacted
with your brand three times
in a week, would it feel
consistent or confusing?*



9. DECIDE THE EMOTION YOU WANT TO CONNECT

Every piece of communication creates an emotional response, whether intended or not.

Strong brands are deliberate about this. They decide how they want their audience to feel and ensure tone, language and channel support that outcome.

Do you want them to feel desire, want or jealousy? Surprise, shock or outrage? Privileged, spoilt or content?

When feeling and message align, communication feels coherent and confident. That consistency is what turns attention into belief.

If you don't choose the feeling, your audience will.

HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO FEEL?

Name the feeling you want your audience to leave with. Now check if your tone, language and channels support it.



10. DEFINE MESSAGES PEOPLE WILL REMEMBER

**Effective messaging
focuses less on features
and more on meaning.**

People remember how something made them feel long after they forget the details. Describing impact, reassurance and benefit helps messages stay with them.

Clear, emotionally grounded messages cut through far more effectively than long lists of facts.

FACTS INFORM. FEELINGS STICK.

What is the one thing you want people to remember tomorrow, not everything you want to say today?

Emotive advertising content can be twice as effective as rational content.



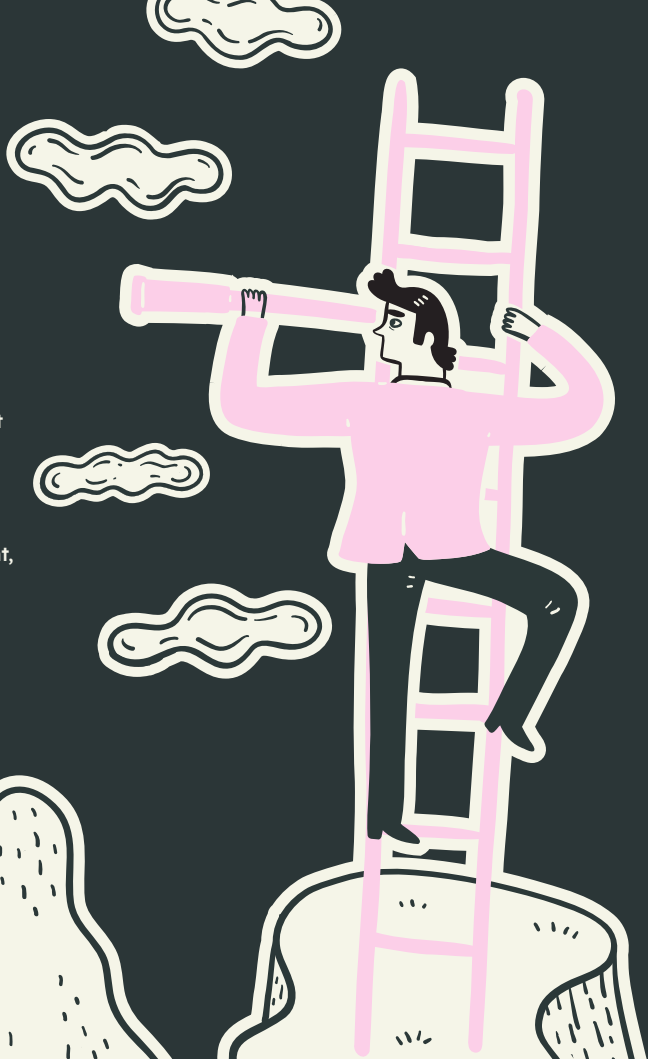
11. TURN BELIEF INTO ACTION

Connection only matters if it leads somewhere.

Strong brands think beyond awareness and ask what they want people to do next. Enquire. Visit. Apply. Stay. Recommend.

Emotion plays a crucial role here. People act when they feel confident, reassured and understood. When belief is established earlier, taking the next step feels less risky.

When communication, experience and emotion align, action follows naturally. Over time, this is what turns connection into loyalty and advocacy.



12. KEEP LISTENING AND EVOLVING

Connection is not something you build once and move on from.

Audiences change and expectations shift. Strong brands stay curious about how they are experienced and pay attention to what people say, ask and hesitate over.

Listening helps brands adapt without losing who they are. By responding thoughtfully and refining over time, they remain relevant, trusted and meaningful.

Lasting connection comes from care and attention, applied consistently.

LISTENING BUILDS LONGEVITY.

Brands that keep listening remain relevant, trusted and meaningful.



OVER 35 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE.

ABBOTS
BROMLEY



BARFIELD
SCHOOL



Barrow Hills
SCHOOL



Birkdale
SCHOOL



BIRKENHEAD
SCHOOL



Dulwich Prep & Senior



FOREST
LONDON



HAMPTON
SCHOOL



Ibstock Place
CO-EDUCATIONAL DAY SCHOOL



KING'S SCHOOL
ROCHESTER

King's
Worcester



Newland House
School



OUNDLÉ
SCHOOL



PST
PREP SCHOOLS
TRUST

QEH
PREP



Queen Margaret's
Essex Park • York

THE QUEEN'S SCHOOL

RADLEY



REDMAIDS' HIGH SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS - BRISTOL



REDMAIDS' HIGH SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS - BRISTOL



RISHWORTH
SCHOOL

RISHWORTH
SCHOOL

Sedbergh

Sedbergh

SEVENOAKS
PREPARATORY SCHOOLS



ST ANDREW'S
PREP

ST ANDREW'S
PREP

ST EDWARD'S
PREP

ST EDMUND'S

ST EDWARD'S
OXFORD

SAINT FELIX SCHOOL
SOUTHWOLD

ST GEORGE'S
The British International School

St Hilary's
Preparatory School



ST LAWRENCE
COLLEGE



ST MARGARET'S PREP
CAINE



ST PETER'S
PREPARATORY SCHOOL



ST PIRAN'S
Inspiring Confidence



ST TERESA'S



St Winifred's
School



STOCKPORT
GRAMMAR SCHOOL



SURBITON
HIGH SCHOOL



TAUNTON
SCHOOL



The Gregg
Preparatory School



THE ORATORY
PREP SCHOOL



LSST

Thomas's
CLAPHAM



THORNTON
SCHOOL



UWC
Life-changing education

WEST BUCKLAND
SCHOOL



WEST BUCKLAND
SCHOOL • DEVON



WYCOMBE ABBEY



WITHAM HALL



Wycombe Abbey
Buckinghamshire



LET'S BUILD SOMETHING GREAT TOGETHER.

We're a strategic brand agency that unites sharp thinking with creative craft to help organisations define who they are, what they stand for, and how they show up in the world.

Our services for schools include:

Brand & Marketing Strategy · Graphic Design
Marketing & Campaigns · Messaging & Copywriting
Print for Schools · Digital For Schools

QUANTOCK.COM/SCHOOLS



✉ hello@quantock.com

☎ 01823 327532

Quantock, 100 Staplegrove Road,
Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1DN