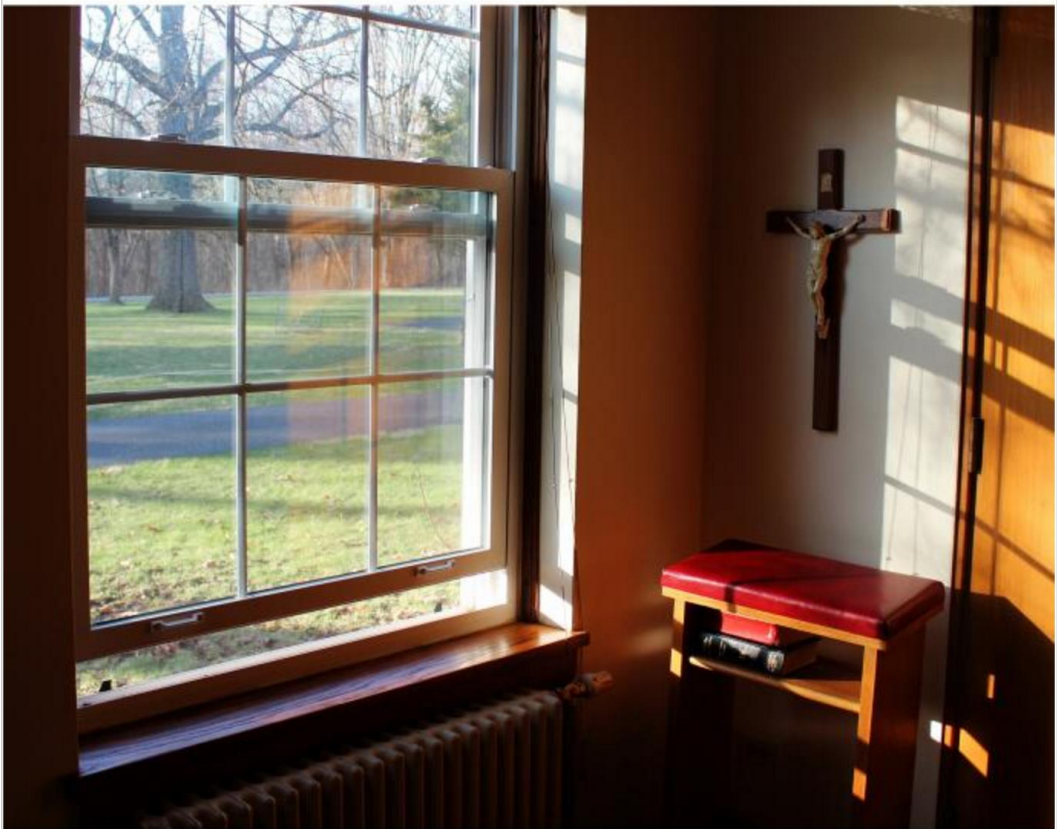


HOW TO ATTRACT VOCATIONS

Using Social Media



by Kevin J. Banet
VocationPromotion.com

How to Attract & Nurture Top Vocations with Social Media

A New, Proven Three-Step Method

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Introduction

The Vocation Director's Quandary

Are you a vocation director who has been given the job of attracting young Catholic candidates to your community? Do you anguish over how you can find such people with a limited budget and time to spend? ... How you can juggle this job with the others that you've been given?

Vocations work today is daunting. And while vocations in parts of the developing world seem to flow like water from Moses' stick upon the rock, you find that many candidates in English-speaking countries, though well intentioned, aren't very well educated about the truths of the faith. Or they have various personal obstacles that block the way of a vocation ... or there just aren't many of them.

And where do you find candidates? You've been to youth conferences and held vocation retreats. Yes, you've heard that social media is the way to go today. Yet your website and Facebook page simply don't seem to be doing the job. Do you feel overwhelmed by it all?

I have been struggling to solve just these problems for vocation directors like you for years. As a Catholic marketer, my goal is to do as much as I can to find vocations with the internet. I'm convinced that the internet holds out great potential for this work – if used in the right way.

I bring to bear in this matter six years of experience living as a member of the St. Martin de Porres Lay Dominican Community in New Hope, KY. This was a unique Third Order community of lay and celibate persons. My vocation journey was probably like that of a lot of young people. I was first attracted to their pro-life apostolate of sidewalk counseling. I admired the group's path from starting as a hippy community in California, and searching for the truth, and then entering the doors of the Catholic Church.

The group's simple life in rural Kentucky along with their high ideals of raising families in a solid Catholic environment appealed to me greatly. After I moved in, I made friends there and learned a lot about a vocational call, and about life as a Dominican Third Order member.

My experience there gave me a wealth of knowledge about the nature of the apostolate, as well as the struggles and joys of everyday life in a community.

This booklet banks on that knowledge, and aims to shed much-needed light on recruiting vocations on the internet. This booklet is a description of a program that is called the [Come & See Vocation Promotion Program](#), and it has been developed since 2013. It has succeeded in attracting thousands of qualified candidates for religious communities in the United States. Because it does so much, it is unique among other online vocation methods – perhaps in the whole world. The Come & See Program is a project of the marketing firm I head, TreeFrogClick, Inc.

When I started this booklet, my wife said, “Don’t give away your secrets.” Well, these secrets are just too good to keep for myself, I answered. If they will help the Church at large, why not? Of course, there is a lot more to the program than what you read here, but this is it in a nutshell at this point in its development.

Many of the methods described here can be put into practice by vocation directors in any place of the world. If you want to plunge in, you must have a fair level of computer tech knowledge and the time to learn the techniques. Other parts of it I think are very complex, and are best left to a marketing firm such as ours.

Best wishes to you, dear reader, in your task of cooperating with God’s grace to find vocations for your community!

Kevin J. Banet, [VocationPromotion.com](#), April 20, 2017

I. **Attracting good candidates**

The story of Miguel and Rachel

Just recently two names popped up among the many young people who have taken our “Is God Calling You?” online quiz. One, whom we’ll call Miguel, is 19, lives in the San Diego area, and made some efforts to attend a local diocesan vocations day. He attends the local community college and works part time. His parents are churchgoing Catholics and approve of his interest in the consecrated life.

The other person, whom I’ll call Rachel, is 18, and one of nine home-schooled children from rural Virginia who also took our quiz. Her older brother is in the seminary.

These two people are both interested in the consecrated life, and represent a few among more than a thousand persons who have taken our quiz, which asks questions about their prayer life, their level of interest in religious life, and other important factors.

Miguel and Rachel have started the first of our three-step program to *capture*, *qualify*, and *cultivate* religious candidates. They seem like great candidates, right? But will they come to your discernment retreat? Are they truly right for you? They have been “captured in the net” so to speak, but still need to progress along the vocation path. And you must find if they have the qualifications for a vocation to your community.

No “fancy marketing programs”

Many church workers question whether marketing methods can, or should be used to recruit vocations. I remember hearing the late Fr. Benedict Groeschel say something like, “Big fancy marketing programs aren’t the answer to vocations.”

Yes, big marketing programs do not *always* work, unless they’re done correctly. First of all, you have to start with a community that is living an authentic religious life. But what if you *are* carrying out all the essentials of religious life - living in common, praying together, wearing the garb proper to your community, and staying faithful to Church teaching?

Beyond that, you must have some kind of outreach or strategy. Unless Mother Teresa, St. Therese of Lisieux or other such luminary was your founder, you need to make yourself known to your candidates.

No doubt that will involve using what Vatican Council II, in *Inter Mirifica*, called the modern means of communications.

This booklet deals with the internet vocation methods, since that is the newest communications technology. In case you're wondering whether the Church encourages the use of the new media, the answer is yes. Popes and prominent Catholic thinkers have spoken in favor of the new media. Pope Benedict spoke of the "digital continent" in his 2009 World Day of Communications. He said, "I ask you to introduce into the culture of this new environment of communications and information technology the values on which you have built your lives."

For other quotes, see our Vocation Promotion website page, ["Papal/Church Statements."](#)

My inner conflict

It gives me a good feeling when I see the discernment retreats of our clients fill up as a result of our vocations program. And yet for a long time I felt a conflict in this work.

You see, in 2007 I launched a full-time online marketing company, TreeFrogClick, with the intention of building websites for Catholic nonprofits and businesses. It seemed logical that I would serve religious communities, since I had worked for twelve years for the Institute on Religious life in Mundelein, IL, as well as for other Catholic apostolates.

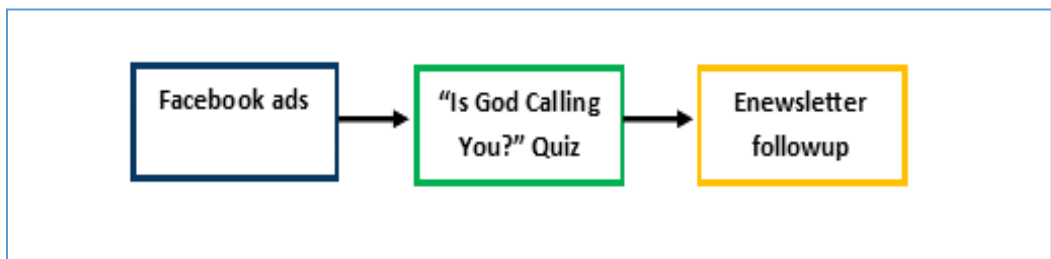
And yet I yearned to rub shoulders with the secular people of the world - to become an influence for Christ in a society that seems to have forgotten about Him.

I also wanted to make sure I could earn enough money for my growing family. Our children were both under ten years old at the time. I thought that if I worked for nonprofits, I would not be able to earn enough money to support my family.

And yet our vocations program here at TreeFrogClick was producing real results - vocation directors were telling me that my system was bringing them candidates. Maybe God wanted me to stay in this field, and there was a way that it could all work out.

Since then our vocation recruitment method has evolved into a system using Facebook ads, online quizzes and a newsletter followup program. I'm convinced that our online recruitment system is unique in the world.

II. A Three-Part System



The above three steps describe our system to “capture, qualify and cultivate” the candidates.

Capture, qualify and cultivate

Our vocations system consists of three parts: capture, qualify and cultivate prospects. The first step is the ad campaign, which brings in twenty or more candidates per month. The ad clicks to a quiz, which heightens interest in the religious community, and also qualifies the candidates. In other words, it filters out the best candidates with the questions it asks.

The quiz asks certain disqualifying questions - such as whether they have problems believing all the Church teaches, whether they like the idea of wearing a habit, or they have certain personal problems such as being on medication, or having a large student loan debt, for example.

When we started the service all we had were the ads. We would dump the names of the candidates into the vocation director's lap. But the directors didn't have time to contact all these people.

Part of our education in all of this was when we made phone calls with these young candidates. We discovered that they knew little of that particular community. In other words, they saw the ad and took the quiz, which had Community X's name on it. But outside of the quiz, they had never heard about the community.

Thus, we realized that for this program to do any good, we had to *nurture* these candidates. They had to be taught about what consecrated/religious life was all about, as well as learn about *the one community* we had advertised. Thus, a regular newsletter.

Therefore, we developed a three-part system. First, we *capture* the candidates with social media ads, then *qualify* them with a quiz, and then *cultivate* them with newsletters and an invitation to come to that community's come and see retreat.

Ads need a targeted audience

**Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament**
Sponsored · 🌐

Like Page

Last summer three postulants joined our community. Is Jesus calling YOU? Take our quiz.



Joy in Finding God's Path
Click and take our quiz, "Is Jesus Calling You?" and find out if you might be called to religious life.

MERCEDARIANSISTERS.ORG/IS JESUS CALLING YOU? [Learn More](#)

**Poor Clares of Langhorne, PA**
Sponsored · 🌐

Like Page

Are you called to become a Poor Clare nun? See photos - take our brief quiz! Come to our Live-In Experience June 3-9.



Find Your Calling - Quiz on Contemplative Life
Take our quiz and then come to our Live-In Experience June 3-9. The contemplative life is a life-long journey to God in prayer and worship, turning from all else that could make the journey less direct. Find out if...

POOR-CLARES-LANGHORNE: GOOGLE.COM/TES... [Learn More](#)

Like Comment Share

St. Procopius Abbey
Sponsored · 🌐

Is God calling you? Take our quiz and find out. Then come to our Easter Triduum Vocation Discernment Retreat April 13 - 16, 2017. Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.
At St. Procopius Abbey, Lisle, IL.



Quo Vadis?
Where are you going in life...
procopius.google.com/quo-...

[Learn More](#)

Mercedarian
Sponsored · 🌐

Think God may be calling you to become a Mercedarian Friar? Take this simple quiz.



Catholic Men, Take Our Quiz
"My Life for Your Freedom"
orderofmercy.org/Is-God-Calling?

[Learn More](#)

Facebook ads for women's and men's religious communities. The ads ask the reader if they might have a religious vocation, and invite them to take a brief quiz to find out.

The first part of the three-part system is advertising. Step one of your ad is to *target* your audience. To develop our audiences for Facebook ads, we choose various interest groups, such as Franciscan University at Steubenville, Christendom College, and Fellowship of Catholic University Students, to name only a few. So, the ads are sent to those who were fans of those pages, or who showed an interest in those organizations.

We found that simply advertising to a "Catholic" audience in general brought in *too many unqualified candidates*. It's not good enough just to identify yourself as a Catholic. We needed *devout* Catholics who were educated in their faith. Thus, the need for our proprietary list of about sixty interest groups.

With these targeting methods, we can reach about 50,000 young single men and 50,000 young single ladies, many of whom are devout Catholics.

A quiz that qualifies

Not many people want to take a survey, but if you can *help them in some way* they are more likely to take the bait. Thus, we tell them in our ads

that they can take our quiz and find their true calling in life. We might use a headline such as “Is Jesus Calling You?”

Is Jesus Calling You? - Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament

Take our brief quiz and find out if Jesus is calling you to religious life! Feel free to comment in the "Other" section. Then get your score.

* Required

Religious life may be for you!

Tell me a little about yourself. *

☐ Soon to be graduated from high school.
 ☐ Graduated from high school.
 ☒ I'm in college.
 ☐ Graduated from college.
 ☐ Other: _____

The above is the first question to our “Is Jesus Calling You” quiz.

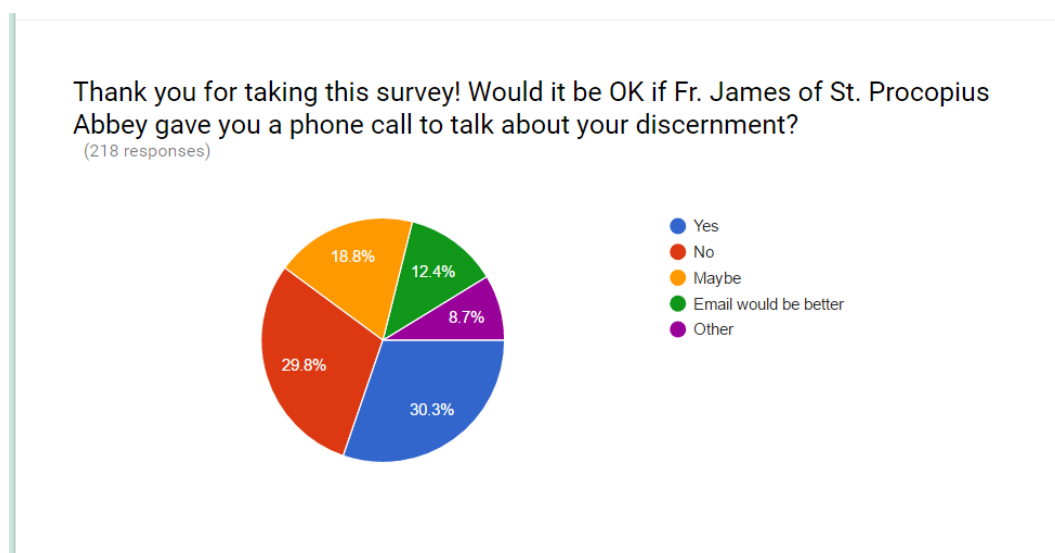
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
First Name	Last Name	Email	Age	State	Phone	Qualified?	Importance of Catholic f
Carrie		Flyinma	36	NY	607	23 Vows overwhelming.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Cheryl		c.ener	31	California	562-	97 Quiz not taken.	
Clare		cmela	21	IN/PA	412	51 Medication.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Clare		Musica	19	Illinois	708	9 Vows overwhelming.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Corina		corin	18	PA	'41 71	997 Yes.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Destinee		destinee	18	Louisiana	98	221 Yes.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Diana		d.mora	29	California	310	142 Yes	I am a Catholic, and my f
Emily		Egmc	20	Tennessee	901	35 Yes.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Ileana		Leana	16	Pa	570?	's m Not Catholic	I'm not a Catholic, but an
Jennifer		ontario100	34	Illinois	775	5 Separated, medication.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Julia		Julian	21	Virginia	757	24 Yes.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Kelly		kellya	19	KY	855	938 Low interest in prayer.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Kelly		Kt	25	Indiana	80	0 Yes	I am a Catholic, and my f
Kelly		rosa31	19	Pennsylvania	57	76 Poor Prayer life.	I never go to church, or s
Lilly		lcf34	21	PA	215	64 Don't want to live with others.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Marie		marie.	21	Pa	610	10 Medication.	I am a Catholic, and my f
Mary Anna		ball21	19	West Virginia	304	200 Not Catholic. Medication.	I'm not a Catholic, but an
Puspita		dhey	29	nh	60	9 Yes	I am a Catholic, and my f
Ryan		Rmurph	21	VA	40	72 Not Catholic	I'm not a Catholic, but an

*After the quiz is taken, the results go into the above spreadsheet.
The “Qualified” column shows “Yes” for a good candidate.*

There are various free quiz softwares out there, such as SurveyGizmo, but the one we like is Google forms. In our quiz we ask about 15 multiple-choice questions about their prayer life, level of interest in the consecrated life, as well as the problem issues already mentioned. Thus, we filter out the best people. Google forms also allows you to put photos with each question, and we think this is a good way to get them to know the community.

A good way to note which candidates are good is to download the names from the mailing software as a spreadsheet and make a column called “Qualified.” Then note which ones are good with a “yes,” and indicate the reasons why the others are not good. This is shown on the image above.

Thus, you have an ongoing reference sheet for when you make contact with a candidate.



The summary of quiz results above shows that 30% would be willing to get a phone call from the vocation director.

Newsletters that nurture

Do newsletters work? People often complain, “I hate getting all those newsletters in my inbox.” But if you ask them further, most of those people read the ones they deem valuable. We find an ongoing open rate for our client newsletters ranging from 25% to 40%, which is decent. The response to the first few newsletters is even higher.



Our newsletters will focus on these crucial vocational topics

Hi Friend,



Welcome to the newsletter community of the **Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament**. I just wanted to say I am thrilled that you have taken an interest in discerning your God-given vocation. You have been added to our mailing list because you took one of our quizzes, clicked on our ad, or subscribed to the list.

Our newsletters will focus on three areas: 1) What **religious life** is all about, 2) How to **discern your God-given vocation**, and 3) The **charism and apostolate** of the

As shown above, it's best in the welcome newsletter to tell your candidates the exact purpose of the newsletter, and how you got their name.

Newsletters that both inform and move people to action are difficult to write. As a matter of fact, there is one major pitfall that a lot of organizations make. It's that when they write the letters, they just want to *talk about themselves*. That's a deal killer. Is this the way you approach

candidates at a youth conference? Or on the other hand, do you ask them questions and begin a *dialog*, and then match your answers to what they need to know?

Any such candidates are best helped by first giving them information about discernment and consecrated life in general. Information about your community can't be shouted through a bullhorn. Thus, in our work we have developed a line of education and involvement in our newsletters that rotates between the below topics.

Newsletter topic areas

1. Education in consecrated/religious life
2. Steps to help in discernment
3. Information about the particular community

Urgent last-month appeal for retreat (Live retreat date)

Course Series • Friends of the Marcedonians List

Sending 1 email

53.0%	1.5%	198
Open rate	Click rate	Sends

Video testimonials of women entering religious life - Polls

New Student Orientation • Friends of the Marcedonians List

Sending 4 emails, 3 draft

70.7%	5.2%	58
Open rate	Click rate	Sends

Fr. Hardon's article - triggered by previous email open - No poll

New Student Orientation • Friends of the Marcedonians List

Sending 1 email

93.0%	11.6%	43
Open rate	Click rate	Sends

*The above autoresponder newsletters show very good open rates.
The click rate is when readers click on a link inside the newsletter.
The monkey is the logo for Mailchimp.*

We will probably develop this approach into packaged courses that will be very attractive to the candidates.

There are many newsletter services, but the one we like is MailChimp. They have a free service, and a series of monthly paid services that have certain features.

Autoresponders make it easy

One of the greatest of newsletter techniques is the autoresponder, or automated newsletter. These newsletters are triggered when something happens, such as when someone joins your mailing list. Thus, you can have a welcome series of newsletters, all of which trigger one after another.

You can thus set up your autoresponders for months out, and the system operates itself. Of course, when you get your new retreat dates, you want to update all your autoresponders.

III. Smart Marketing for Vocations

Marketing follows sales

All marketing is the little brother of sales. Sales of course, is personal contact between two people to sell a product or service. But since no vocation director can personally meet hundreds of candidates, he or she needs a media-driven approach.

Experienced salespeople will tell you that every person who buys a service or product has gone through a “sales funnel.” This is a series of steps that the prospect takes, from first becoming aware of something to “buying into” it.

Below is a drawing of the four stages of the vocation sales funnel.



The four steps of the vocation sales funnel. The candidate moves down the funnel from step 1 to step 4.

The traditional four steps of the sales funnel are: attention, interest, decision, and action. The above graph shows the four steps as adapted to vocation work. Of course, there are many people who enter the first step, and not as many get to step two. The field narrows each time the candidates progress. Those who make it to the end are the best qualified.

Successful stats

What kind of results do we get with this program? Our communities tell us that we can fill three or four out of eight seats in a come and see retreat. Other data show that we are hitting the right people. In a recent survey for one women's community that we served, among 121 respondents, 18% said they would like to pursue a vocation as a religious sister. Sixty-four percent said "maybe."

We also found that in a group of 354 men, 42% agreed with the phrase, "In prayer, God seems to speak to me in a positive way about religious/consecrated life."

For other statistics, see our press release, ["Vocation Recruitment Makes Big Strides on the Internet."](#)

See also the quotes of vocation directors who enjoy using our program on our website [Testimonials](#) page.

How much can one vocation director do?

In this booklet, I've shown you the basics of the three-step program of our [Come & See Vocation Promotion Program](#). I'm aware that many marketing whitepapers out there boast of how easy-peasy their methods can win incredible success for you. To me, it's a bit over the top. I would not be honest with you with this language. I would say that only one of the three steps are doable by the average computer-literate person.

First of all, Facebook ads are quite complicated to run. There are eleven different types of ads, with many variations within each one. Furthermore, the software giant's ad service is sometimes capricious at this writing. Their technology is rather new (about the place where Google Adwords were in the early 2000's), and Facebook is still developing its platform. So I won't lay too much blame here.

Recently we've been picking up new names of those who take the quiz for about \$4 each in click costs. That's good. But the next day you can spend \$20 and get nothing. Thus, the ads have to be monitored twice a day or you can blow \$100 or more in a short time.

The quiz technology on the other hand, is easier to learn, but you have to get large numbers of people to take them. Thus the need for ads.

The newsletter part of it, however, is doable for the average person who has used the internet and is comfortable with programs such as MS Word. If you are able to send out two newsletters per month, you know enough to be handy at it. But you must find a way to get a good number of new prospect names each month.

Best wishes in your vocation work! Contact me below for any questions.

Contact TreeFrogClick

The [Come & See Vocation Promotion Program](#) attracts and develops candidates for religious communities. It is a monthly promotion program offered by TreeFrogClick, Inc., of which Kevin Banet is president.

If you liked this ebooklet, why not let us help you increase the number of your vocation candidates with the Come & See Program? Contact Kevin Banet at 708-393-4098, or email kevin@treefrogclick.com.

Or, fill out the [Come & See Vocation Promotion Program contact form](#).