

A NEW MISSION:
MARKETING JESUIT VOCATION IN THE MODERN AGE

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Introduction

In 1999, the Wall Street Journal published an article about an Indiana religious order saved from the verge of extinction thanks for some clever thinking. In the late 80s, the Benedictine sisterhood in Ferdinand, IN was dying off. Although they had 275 active nuns in the convent, over 60% of them were over 70 years old, and they were only recruiting about one new sister per year on average.¹ At that rate, the order would practically cease to exist within a matter of years. Fortunately, the sisters made a controversial change to their approach that changed everything: they began to treat their convent like a business.

Allying themselves with local business owners and even an advertising executive, the sisters of St. Benedict discovered the power of marketing analytics. Pretty soon, they had assembled a task force armed with schematic charts and databases to breakdown and analyze prospective sisters and define their target demographic. They created an ad campaign specifically designed to attract extroverted Gen X-ers with funny slogans including: “We’re a monastery, not a mortuary.”² These eye-catchers allowed them to begin a dialogue with curious young women, allowing the sisterhood to show off that life as a nun is a life of good and excitement, not just stuffy habits and day-long prayers.

Naturally, their new tactics were not received by the sisterhood without discomfort or pushback. Some suggested the target age group was too narrow. Others believed that the ads were too humorous. However, it soon became undeniable that marketing the profession of a nun was effective. Within a few years, their annual recruitment success had tripled.

¹ Meera Louis, “Modern Marketing Helps Sell Life as a Nun,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 11, 1999.

² Ibid.

It often seems there is an inherent wrongness about combining religion and religious institutions with business principles or vocabulary. Perhaps there is a danger in confusing the God of Abraham with the god of Capitalism. But religion can resemble business more often than people would like to think. Furthermore, marketing—one of the fundamental elements of business—applies to any institution, including non-secular ones. The Ferdinand sisterhood figured that out, and they approached their own vocational goals with a marketing framework, yielding fantastic results. Not only did they find a way to reconcile these seemingly conflicting ideas of business and religion, but they also realized the fact that a true marketing strategy allowed them to reach an audience that would not have been likely, or even possible, otherwise.

The Society of Jesus's actions indicate that they have only acknowledged and embraced within the last decade. Ironically—for reasons that we will discuss later in this thesis—the Jesuits in this situation fell far behind the curve for using modern technology to promote their order, wasting the opportunity to call men to the Jesuit vocation.

This thesis aims to delve into this evolution of the contemporary Jesuit marketing strategy in North America for recruiting new members into the religious order. Although “marketing strategy” may not have been the Society's choice term to describe their vocation promotion initiatives throughout the centuries, marketing has and continues to apply to them as a religious organization. Beginning to catch up on that realization, they have had to drastically alter their approach to this strategy within the 21st century.

In order to articulate this point, we must clarify what marketing is and what it offers to organizations in both the business and religious worlds. The importance and scope of marketing extends far beyond *Mad Men*-style advertising campaigns and familiar slogans like Nike's “Just do it” or Apple's “Think different.” At its most basic level, marketing is the all-encompassing

concept of identifying and satisfying customers' needs and wants. This process can be broken down into four essential elements making up a concept called the "marketing mix": Product, Place, Price, and Promotion--otherwise known as the 4 P's.³

Product refers to the tangible item or intangible service (or a combination of the two) that satisfies a customer's demand.⁴ For example, a customer may purchase a product like a Snickers bar to satisfy hunger. Similarly, a customer may have a need to satisfy an achy back, so they could request the service of a masseuse. Here, the back massage would be the product.

Place describes the logistics involved in making a product available in the proper quantities and locations when customers want them.⁵ More simply put, this element ensures that the customer can access the product. For example, a Snickers bar can be accessed in a grocery store, convenience store, or even a vending machine. Or, if you are a true candy fanatic, you may order Snickers bars in bulk online. The physical store or an online marketplace can both be "places" to connect consumers to the product, and these two examples would aim to satisfy two distinct target customers groups (a casual candy eater making a spontaneous in a check-out line versus a Snickers fanatic planning ahead and ordering in mass). Creating convenient and efficient points of access allow businesses to reach their specific target markets.

Price, of course, refers to what it costs the customer to acquire the product. Usually, price implies a simple monetary value. A Snickers bar in a vending machine may cost \$1, for instance. To set a price, a marketer must understand the customer's perceived value of a product. That means understanding the customer deeply enough to know how much they value the product and what they would be willing to pay for it.

³ Claudia Kubowicz Malhotra, BUSI 406 - Principles of Marketing undergraduate course lecture, University of North Carolina-CH, Spring 2014. Widely shared marketing concept originally accredited to Neil Borden of the American Marketing Association.

⁴ Ibid. These are widely accepted and frequently used marketing terms.

⁵ Ibid.

Finally, people most often associate the “promotion” with marketing. This element involves all of the communication a marketer will use to provide the customer with information about the product and communicate the value it provides. This includes advertising, slogans (Snickers’ “Satisfied”), sales promotions, and even word-of-mouth to communicate product value to an audience.

Despite the specificity of terms in the marketing mix, the importance of these 4 P’s principles apply to much more than marketing departments for for-profit companies. As the Sisters of St. Benedict discovered in the 1990s, understanding and embracing marketing principles allowed them to magnify their impact. Framing religious orders as businesses can be an incredibly useful way for the religious to simplify and tackle organizational challenges—in particular, to refine the art of vocational callings.

The Jesuit Marketing Mix

This applies for the Society of Jesus and their efforts of “vocation promotion” perhaps more than any other religious organization, which we will explore throughout this essay. Despite the relevance of marketing, we will also see that the uniqueness of the religious life and Jesuit offering can make it challenging to align these principles for effective invitation.

They have a product: life as a Jesuit Brother with a place within the fraternity either as brother or ordained priest to share vows, spiritual connection, and dedication to service with thousands of others. Clearly, this does not fit so neatly into the categories of a good/service, but the Jesuits offer a lifestyle and community, profession, and even a clerical duty for those ordained as their product.

Defining “place” for the Jesuit vocation becomes a little more interesting. Joining a religious order is a little more complicated than making a purchase at a store. Jesuit communities, schools, universities, parishes, and so on all serve as locations to interact with Jesuits and learn about their lifestyle. But, the real access points for potential candidates—the consumers—remain more elusive. Access to discover the Jesuit vocation occurs largely by invitation. This invitation could occur through a discernment retreat, a social meet and greet, or even just a phone call. Here, the place takes many forms, highlighting an important difference for religious orders compared to traditional commercial organizations. Not always physical and not always consistent, this intangibility of place adds to the challenges the Society may have in building an effective marketing strategy.

The marketing mix nuances continue with “price.” It is difficult to assign a universal “value” to life as a Jesuit, and consequently, to assign a cost to customers. This becomes much more subjective for each individual customer. But clearly, Jesuits forfeit many opportunities that could be considered a price to pay. These include the opportunity to marry, to care for a child, and to have sex, for example. These opportunities hold different values for individuals. Perhaps to arrive at the clearest and most concise way to attribute a Price for the Jesuit product, we should consider the four vows every Jesuit takes: poverty, chastity, obedience, and obedience to the Pope in regard to mission.

Promotion seems the most straightforward of the elements in the Jesuit marketing mix. Now that we have established they do have a product, they also need a way to communicate information about that product and its value to customers. Because life in the Society can take a dramatically different form for each Jesuit brother, promotional efforts can also present a challenge. Within the last ten or so years, though, the North American Assistancy has made

tremendous progress to consolidate its promotional efforts and refine its message to candidates and the general public using modern digital resources, especially the internet.

In today's increasingly digital world, the possible audience for the Jesuits to reach through invitations has reached the biggest in history. On the other side of that coin, easier public access to information—both credible and not—has presented one of the many marketing obstacles the Society has faced in the last few decades. In addition to priesthood sexual abuse scandals, the Jesuits have been subject to more than a few popular conspiracy theories on the Web.

On a more macro level, the priesthood has shrunk rapidly. According to a 2014 USA Today report, the priesthood has fallen 33% since 1975 in the United States. Ironically, the Catholic population has grown 43% in this same period.⁶ So with the American priesthood in shortage, the pool of potential candidates appears larger than ever. In addition to new possibilities to reach a huge audience via the Internet, this fact indicates that today's environment presents a fantastic opportunity for Jesuit vocation promotion to capitalize.

Fortunately, the Society has made some serious adjustments to take advantage of this opportunity within the last decade. Just since 2009, the Jesuits inaugurated the National Director of Vocation Promotion position. Since then, the vocation team has focused on optimizing their online presence and consolidating and focusing the recruitment effort throughout the United States and Canada. This thesis will focus on this transformation as the Society, though late to the game, is beginning to embrace 21st century technology to achieve their mission today. Further, it will explore why this embrace epitomizes the Jesuit spirit of social justice and of enculturation tracing all the way back to the days and example of the Society's founder Ignatius of Loyola.

⁶ Dave Breitenstein, "US Catholics face shortage of priests," *USA Today*, May 25, 2014, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2014/05/25/us-catholics-face-shortage-of-priests/9548931/>

Finally, I will attempt to construct a basic but comprehensive marketing strategy brief of the vocation landscape, focusing on market segmentation and prioritization for the Society going forward.

Chapter I – Walking Jesuit Vocation Promotion into the Digital Age

“Every Jesuit, every Jesuit community, every Jesuit apostolate or work is or should be a promoter of vocations.”

Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., Superior General,
Response to Annual Letters of 2010

Jesuit: The Brand

In 2013, Br. Michael Breault, SJ, left his position as vice president of creative affairs at the Jesuit multimedia corporation Loyola Productions, Inc. to take an office at the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States headquarters in Washington, D.C. as the second ever National Director of Vocation Promotion. Breault, a filmmaker and entertainer by training, has worn many hats throughout his career as a writer, producer, and director for theater, film, and TV--in addition to being a Jesuit, took the reigns as something of a combination between Chief Marketing Officer and Human Resources Director for the Society of Jesus in North America. As it turns out, Breault, an award-winning artist, seems to be the perfect successor to complete the vision of the position created only four years earlier.⁷

Fr. Robert Ballecer, SJ, preceded Breault as the inaugural Director in 2009. According to Breault, Ballecer, who has a reputation in the public eye as something of a tech junkie Jesuit, prepared the way for the Jesuits to finally construct a meaningful online presence in the 21st Century and to begin to polish a tarnished reputation in the United States.⁸⁹ At the time, this

⁷ Michael Breault, SJ, “Interview with Br. Michael Breault, SJ,” (interview conducted by the author, Washington, D.C., June 4, 2015).

⁸ Ibid. The interview at hand was conducted without recording equipment and the author recorded quotations and ideas by hand. As a consequence, quotations attributed to Br. Breault throughout this essay are near verbatim, but other non-quotation ideas are paraphrased representations of his statements.

⁹ “Father Robert Ballecer: The Digital Jesuit,” December 2, 2012, accessed March 28, 2016 as cache snapshot of page as it appeared Jan 23, 2016, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:X93gQ9NZti0J:www.jesuit.org/blog/index.php/tag/technology/+&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=safari>

proved still quite the obstacle as several Jesuits and priests throughout the country were the subjects of popular news about the Church scandal that swept the nation.

Just years earlier, news stories and exposés documenting evidence of hundreds of instances of sexual assault and child molestation on the part of Catholic priests—including many Jesuits—opened the nation’s eyes. Unsurprisingly, such a shocking and horrifying scandal has not been an easy one to shake since. Many Americans lost trust in Catholic priests and faith in the Church as a whole. Not only have news of similar abuses continued to come to light throughout the world in years since, but also stories of the abuses and consequent Church cover-ups continue to be relevant in the public eye and stories in popular culture. Just in recent months, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded the “Oscar” for Best Picture to director Tom McCarthy’s *Spotlight*--a film depicting the true story of the Boston Globe’s investigation into the Catholic child sex abuse scandal in Boston in the early 2000s. Of the priests discussed in the film, at least one, Fr. James Talbot, noted in the film as a multi-sport coach at Boston College High School who sexually assaulted students in the locker room, was a Jesuit.¹⁰

Naturally, stories about other Jesuit sexual assault indictments and accusations flooded the Internet, especially in the early 2000s. According to Breault, “It used to be that you would Google ‘Jesuit’ and the first several links would deal with some scandal or lawsuit or various conspiracy theories about the Society.”¹¹ The Jesuit’s allegiance to the papacy and Fourth Vow that we will expand upon later have make them susceptible to suspicion from other Catholic communities, among other qualities. These features of the society, as well as others such as their connections to liberation theology have led others to create various conspiracy theories and

¹⁰ Sacha Pfeiffer, “BC High coach to face charges,” *Boston Globe*, September 18, 2002, accessed March 28, 2016, http://archive.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse/stories3/091802_coach.htm

¹¹ Breault, “Interview.”

mistrust concerning the Society throughout history. In fact, distrust of the Society even led to its disbanding and papal suppression in the 18th century (but were later restored in the early 19th but conspiracies still existing in the present day).¹² Because the Jesuits did not have a consolidated effort to publish their own positive content about the Jesuit offering throughout the assistancy, these articles and blog posts served as a huge distraction for internet surfers from the real mission and services of the Jesuits. This is where Ballecer came in.

“My predecessor cleaned the pipes,” Breault said.¹³ As a man who “always had his finger on the pulse of technology,” according to one article about the Director position, Ballecer spent years studying and manipulating Google Analytics to find the most effective ways to salvage the Jesuit name and image.¹⁴ He used his discoveries to tailor the language Jesuits used in any promotional or informational material to optimize results for those looking to know more about the Society. Not only did this help to ensure positive or informational results would appear first with a “Jesuit” Google search, but this research would help to refine the Jesuit marketing message as well.

Scandal and conspiracy theories were not the only obstacles for the Society in America at this point, however. The entire landscape for Jesuit vocation promotions, or even more simply put, recruitment, had changed. Known internationally for its educational institutions, the Society has relied heavily on this educational network to introduce young men to the ideals and lifestyle of a Jesuit.¹⁵ Now, as many as sixty Jesuit secondary schools and twenty-eight Jesuit universities are in operation in the United States alone. Naturally, much of the faculty, teacher, and professor presence at these institutions were Jesuits. Higher learning institutions were key points of access

¹² John W. O’Malley, SJ, *The Jesuits: A History from Ignatius to the Present* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 63-83.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ “Jesuits Launch New Interactive Vocations Website,” Jesuits News, April 30, 2014, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://jesuits.org/news-detail?TN=NEWS-20140430105024>

¹⁵ Breault, “Interview.”

for young men to interact with in-person, practicing Jesuits on a regular basis. These teachers and coaches would serve as role models and as a gateway look into what the lifestyle of a Jesuit was like. Unfortunately, much of this personal contact has been lost.

While Jesuit institutions continue to hold a reputation for academic and developmental excellence, the presence of Jesuits within the walls that defined these schools is dwindling. “A fourth of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities currently have lay presidents, and the number of Jesuit priests who are active in everyday operations at schools isn’t nearly as high as it once was,” claims an article on the changing Jesuit education landscape in *The Atlantic*.¹⁶ Declining supply of priests drives this diminished presence, not the restructuring of the Society.

The Jesuits have not been immune to the so-called “vocation crisis” within the Church around the world. Following that Second World War that left the European continent in shambles, the numbers of men in the priesthood began to shrink as European populations became more and more secularized. However, this was relatively unfelt in the United States until about 1970 with a significant change in the American Catholic life with the decline of the parish community. In the many parts of the United States in the 20th century especially before the Second Vatican Council, Catholic communities existed as a part of a sort of “Catholic ghetto”—communities of Catholics that surrounding parishes and affiliated parochial schools as a part of everyday life.¹⁷ A “sudden exodus” from these communities in they years following Vatican II, therefore, led to a decline in parish life in America.¹⁸ The average Catholic’s exposure and interactions with priests, including Jesuits, changed dramatically as a consequence of this

¹⁶ Autumn Jones, “The New Brand of Jesuit Universities,” *The Atlantic*, December 13, 2014, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/12/the-new-brand-of-jesuit-universities/384103/>.

¹⁷ Garry Wills, “Memories of a Catholic Boyhood (1972)” in Mark Massa, SJ, ed. *American Catholic History: A Documentary Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 263-271.

¹⁸ Albert Ottenweller, “A Call to Restructure the Parish (1975)” in Massa, *American Catholic History*, 271-274.

shifting religious experience now that essential points of contact—parishes and schools—had essentially been lost.

Since 1970, the number of total priests in the United States has shrunk 36.5% from 59,192 to 37,578 in 2015. Even more strikingly, the number of Jesuits has halved since 1988 shrinking from 4,823 to 2,395 in 2013.¹⁹ Correlated to the change in the parish life and Catholic community distancing the population from the priesthood, the Society has considerably shrunk along with the rest of religious life and the clergy. Consequently, the Society cannot staff its nearly 90 academic institutions throughout the country the way it could nearly thirty years ago with only half the size of its membership. Not only does this scarcity of Jesuits make reaching a potential candidate market much more difficult, but it accentuates the necessity for the Society to make vocation promotion a real priority. Without some sort of innovation, they find themselves in this cyclical dilemma of current size impeding growth that they have seen for decades.

Without the presence of Jesuits at these schools, the Jesuit and Catholic identities of many of these institutions have seemingly become less important. For one example, Regis University, a Jesuit college in Colorado, recently launched a new brand campaign. Although keywords for marketing materials do include the words “Catholic” and “Jesuit”, neither word appears in the school’s definition or brand platform, according to *The Atlantic*. The “secularization” of these institutions is also reflected by the student bodies in which fewer religiously affiliated students, and for that matter fewer Catholics, are enrolled than ever before at these universities (as a reflection of the general population in which about 30% of American millennials do not identify with a religion, more than any prior generation).²⁰

¹⁹ “Frequently Requested Church Statistics,” Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), accessed March 28, 2016, <http://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/>

²⁰ Autumn Jones, “The New Brand.”

What used to be one of the principal venues for interaction with prospective candidates, Jesuit schools can no longer be the cornerstone of Jesuit vocation promotion. While there are still bright, Catholic young men at these institutions, the Jesuits simply do not have the resources (read: manpower) to reach them. Schools trending away from embracing “Jesuit” as a defining characteristic also do little to aid the effort to inform students of the Jesuit “product”.

The decline of Jesuit identity at schools, the shrinking of the Society, and the decline of the parish in America are clearly not sudden developments, they are trends that the Society has been facing for decades. National break of the child abuse scandal in the Church was nearly fifteen years ago, and conspiracy theories and public skepticism about the Jesuits have been around practically since the founding of the Society in the 16th Century. It may seem odd, then, that the vocation promotion Director position is so new.

Vocation Promotion as Marketing

In fact, Jesuit leaders in the American and Canadian Conference have been active in promoting the Jesuit brand and even in vocation promotion for years, some even online. The Jesuits have published the weekly *America Magazine*, for instance, reaching a large Catholic audience for over one hundred years since 1909 discussing various topics.²¹ Its Editor-at-Large, Fr. James Martin, SJ, has reached into popular culture through his media appearances on shows like *The Colbert Report* and active social media presence and following with currently over 70,000 Twitter followers. Individuals like Martin and the first-ever Jesuit Pope, Francis, and other popular, active Jesuits have certainly contributed to the national and international brand of the Society.

²¹ “America Media,” *America Magazine*, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://americamagazine.org/aboutus>

Jesuit provinces throughout the United States have (slowly) been increasing their digital and online presence as well. However, this effort has been incredibly disjointed throughout the North American assistancy—one of the six large regions that make up the Jesuit’s global presence. Jesuitseast.org, jesuitswest.org, jesuitsmidwest.org, jesuitscentralsouthern.org, sjnen.org (New England Province), mdsj.org (Maryland Jesuits), jesuits.org, and thinkjesuit.org are just some of the many websites about the Society within the United States, along with many pertaining to a specific province or community within the United States and Canada.

According to Breault, each province had its own system for vocation. This prevented a consistent, consolidated, optimized promotion initiative throughout North America. These scattered and inconsistent messages can be incredibly confusing for men looking for information about how to learn more about Jesuit vocation and lifestyle. Further, most if not all of the above sites focus on local news and events—they do not specifically focus on information about vocations. There was no set of guidelines or instructions to help provinces maximize the efficiency and impact of their sites or how to invite young men to learn more about the Society. This problem would not be solved until 2014 with the launch of a centralized website dedicated specifically to vocation promotion, information about Jesuit life, and invitations for men to engage with real Jesuits.

In the past when the Society was large and information was more localized, the province system seems to have served marketing efforts quite well and logically for the Jesuits in the United States. As mentioned earlier, the Jesuit brotherhood was twice as large as it is today in the country only thirty years ago. Many of those Jesuits were tied to a specific academic institution, and therefore, tied to a specific geography. These high schools and universities would have

served as access points for young men to learn about life as a Jesuit and engage with the Society firsthand through interactions with Jesuits and through curriculum influenced by Jesuit values.

Though they seem to complicate marketing efforts by decentralizing the organization of the Society, provinces do serve a key role for the Jesuits to oversee and organize their presence based on demand for brothers and cultural differences, as well. For instance, at a time, New York and New Orleans were each independent provinces.²² New York has seven Jesuit high schools and three Jesuit universities. This large Jesuit educational presence implies that many Jesuits would have lived and worked throughout the state, both in schools and communities. On the other hand, New Orleans has only one Jesuit high school and university, respectively. But, the city has a large Catholic population and very distinct customs influenced by French and Caribbean cultures. So, it makes sense for New Orleans to be separated into its own governing structure under the US and Canada Conference, as well.

This type of organization for a Catholic order is neither new nor unique to the Jesuits. Ignatius of Loyola first began to divide the Society into provinces in the mid 16th Century, modeling the structure upon other European religious orders. As communities sprung up in various parts of Europe, provincials were assigned to oversee these communities within a designated geography. By 1553, there were six operational provinces--one of which was already established in the New World in Brazil.²³

Over the centuries, the Society began to develop a more sophisticated structure and organized hierarchy as the order continued to multiply, eventually covering practically the entire globe. Today, the Society of Jesus has a centralized governing body called the “curia” in Rome led by the Superior General. Six assistancies spanning the globe and demarcated (mostly) based

²² “Canada and USA Assistancy,” Society of Jesus, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.sjweb.info/resources/usa.cfm>.

²³ O’Malley, *The Jesuits*, 19-20.

on continental geography and language divide the Society underneath the “curia”: North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, South Asia, and East Asia. Assistancies are divided into countries, conferences, and provinces. The provincials who each govern one of the approximately 80 provinces around world report directly to the “curia” and make up their respective Conference. Conferences operate as a Board of Directors providing leadership, oversight, representation, and vision for the provinces they represent as an administrative body.²⁴ So, within the North American Assistancy, the Canada and United States Conference consists of nine provincials and provides leadership for the seven provinces in the United States (Oregon, California, Wisconsin, Central and Southern, Chicago-Detroit, Maryland, and Northeast) and two in Canada (English Canada and French Canada). The United States provinces have been restructured from seven provinces to nine just within recent years with the aforementioned New York and New Orleans provinces combining with the larger New England (to create the Northeast province) and Central and Southern provinces, respectively, as a part of that consolidation effort.²⁵ Largely a result of a shortage of Jesuits, this move has consequently forced the Society to create a more consolidated effort and systematic method for promotion on both a national and global scale, according to Breault.

At precisely this moment, the Society has set out to create this new, leaner, systematic strategy—an initiative led by Breault in the North America. The Jesuits did, however, did have an organization and some sort of strategy deliberately devoted to vocation promotion. After all, their Society would cease to exist without the inflow of new members. Rather, the strategy was too disjointed among provinces. Within each province, a Vocation Director was designated to oversee and review the promotion process. Under him, a Vocation Promoter assists as a more

²⁴ Breault, “Interview.”

²⁵ Ibid.

hands-on manager for this marketing effort and important point of contact for interested men or men looking to know more. While some directors keep themselves more involved than others, the promoter generally holds the responsibility to follow through on the groundwork, Breault said.²⁶ Of course, many Jesuits in communities within the province would also take part in the process, but the director and promoter are the principal facilitators within a given province.

Although it remains unclear exactly how long that structure has existed internally for the Jesuits, it likely emerged in response to falling numbers of entrants into the Society, probably as a result of the Jesuit shortage in schools and a “secularizing” America. In order to understand the impact of promotional efforts on the shrinking society, we must look at the data for representing the Society size in the United States. In the five-year period from 1989-1993, entrants into the Jesuit Novitiate equaled 332 while deaths within the Society over that same period equaled 549. More recently in the period from 2009-2013, 177 entered the Novitiate compared to 445 deaths.²⁷ Obviously, the number of entrants has fallen significantly for reasons we have discussed. The decreased number of deaths also correlates with a shrinking Society. Much more importantly, however these data points tell us that from 1989-1993, for approximately every 5 deaths in the Assistency there were 3 men entering the Novitiate. Jumping forward thirty years, for every 5 deaths, only 2 men were entering the Novitiate. So not only is the Society apparently shrinking, but it is actually disappearing one and half times faster than it was only three decades ago. With that said, this comparison does not even take into account the number of men who drop out of the normal course of formation before taking final vows and full induction into the Society, for which the numbers are 359 and 129 respectively.²⁸

²⁶ Breault, “Interview”.

²⁷ Mark M. Gray, “By the Numbers: Jesuit Demography,” *Nineteen Sixty-four*, January 9, 2015, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://nineteensixty-four.blogspot.com/2015/01/by-numbers-jesuit-demography.html>.

²⁸ Ibid.

Reversing this trend is unfortunately not as easy as just expanding the reach of the Jesuit brand and increasing the number of points of touch with the target demographics. Even if the place and promotion of their marketing efforts perfectly reached the demographic, the reality exists that the Jesuit lifestyle product does not fit everyone. Not only does the product have to feel like a good match for the candidate, but the Jesuits also have to recognize candidate as a good fit in the Society.²⁹ The work does not end with promotion despite the necessity of that element in Jesuit vocation marketing. Remembering the 4 P's of marketing, the Jesuits have seemingly capitalized on the place and promotion pieces—the customer has placed the product in his metaphorical shopping cart. However, the Product is a complicated one and the Price is a lifetime investment. Now, he now has to gain a fuller understanding of what he is getting himself into before he commits.

Before that commitment occurs, the accompaniment and application processes are incredibly thorough and lengthy. The initial point of touch through promotion is key, but it only begins the conversation. After that stage has ended and a conversation has started between an interested customer and a Jesuit (often the Vocation Promoter), that person has now entered the pipeline, so to speak, as a candidate in a stage referred to as “accompaniment”. Accompaniment is a time in which men considering life as a Jesuit truly get to experience that life first-hand and deeply reflect on their Faith and calling. The decision process for a candidate debating whether to apply to the Society varies in duration but usually lasts about a year or not longer, Breault claims.³⁰ Vocation Directors and Promoters facilitate events and make personal connections to help men through this discernment process as one of their essential roles. Places to connect

²⁹ Breault, ‘Interview’.

³⁰ Ibid.

include “Come and See” weekends, vocation nights, “Six Weeks a Jesuit” events, and spiritual retreats.³¹

“Come and See” as well as vocations nights are some of the initiating activities for men beginning their accompaniment to see what the Jesuits are all about. They are something of information sessions for interested men. Other similar events are service oriented in which the candidate guests will work alongside Jesuits in the community and see that aspect of life in the Society. More intense events like “Six Weeks a Jesuit” allow seriously discerning men to gain a sort of crash course experience in the lifestyle, service, community, prayer, reflection, and spiritual conversations of the Jesuits over the course of several weeks. These events help candidates to gain a personal understanding of what it feels like to live life as a Jesuit and if they can, want to, and feel called to be a part of the Society.

The spiritual retreats are often very introspective and reflective regarding individual spirituality, calling to the Jesuit vocation, and relationship and interaction with God. Often guided by a Spiritual Director, these opportunities allow candidates to get a taste of inherently Jesuit prayer, reflection, and contemplation. This provides candidates with the venue to discern the Jesuit life through the use of St. Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises*. “Discernment” itself is a term often associated with the Exercises: a set of meditations, prayers, and reflections developed by the Society’s founder and regularly practiced by men in the novitiate to test one’s vocation. The Spiritual Exercises can offer clarity to the retreatant about important decisions and his relationship with God, especially in application to the discernment process in particular.³²

³¹ “Six Weeks a Jesuit,” Jesuit Vocations Office, accessed March 28, 2016, http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/manresa/documents/Six_Weeks_a_Jesuit_Program_Description_2012.pdf

³² George E. Ganss, SJ, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola—Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991), 49-53.

Of course, the application does not complete the necessary steps to become a “fully formed” Jesuit. Although considered members of the Society as a brother or as a scholastic—meaning one training for ordination—these new entrants face a lengthy road ahead of them. First, Jesuit officials will accept men into the novitiate, a two-year program of work, learning, and prayer during which the novices engage in various ministries called experiments. Next, the Jesuits pronounce first vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. This leads to a period of education at a Jesuit university studying philosophy and theology for three years in a period called first studies. The next stage, regency, spans two to three years or even longer as the Jesuit now works full time in some Jesuit ministry. Once the provincial approves, they move onto theology in which the men study theology at the graduate level. While brothers complete their studies in this stage, scholastics continue into the diaconate. This is a transitional stage, ordaining the scholastic to become a member of the clergy as a deacon before a priesthood stage in which full ordination occurs followed by a “pastoral year” in a Jesuit parish. Then, both the ordained Jesuits and brothers participate in an approximately yearlong spiritual training program. Once they complete this stage including the full Spiritual Exercises, the Jesuit is finally invited to take final vows including all three first vows, but this time including the Jesuit Fourth Vow of obedience to the Pope in regards to missions, marking the completion of formation for the Jesuit.³³

Understanding the full undertaking of the formation puts into perspective why careful discernment is vital for a Jesuit candidate before applying. This discernment process, however, does not occur as a one-way street. Following the promotion and accompaniment stages, finally the Society assesses the candidate. Ultimately, the candidate will have a series of discussions

³³ James Martin, SJ, “Jesuit Formation and Lingo,” *America Magazine*, August 11, 2013, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://americamagazine.org/content/all-things/jesuit-formation-and-lingo>

with the Vocation Director and go through a very intensive application to verify the candidate as both a good match for the Society and ready spiritually, psychologically, physically, and even fiscally to enter the Novitiate. The application includes a first-person spiritual biography, psychological tests, a medical physical, and even close look at the candidate's financials among other tests and information to be assessed in addition to one-on-one conversations with the Director.³⁴ "Jesuits need a spiritual depth and freedom to serve where the need is greatest," said Northeast Province vocation director Fr. Chuck Frederico. "I try to get a sense of whether a man who wants to join us has that capacity. Over time and after careful and deliberate assessment of a candidate I can recommend a man to the provincial."³⁵ If accepted, that man enters the Novitiate, marking just the beginning of a seven or eight year formation journey leading to Final Vows for brothers and often closer to ten or eleven years for scholastics to be ordained.

The marketing strategy for Jesuit vocation, including all three stages of promotion, accompaniment, and assessment, is incredibly complex and unique. Faced with the challenges of a shrinking organization, geographically disjointed efforts, and elusive product, and an arduous and lengthy pipeline, the Society was facing an incredible challenge when it inaugurated its National Director position for vocation promotion and even four years later when handing the reigns to Br. Breault. "The Church has called for the clergy and Catholic religious life to 'create a culture of invitations,'" Breault said.³⁶ Responding to this call, Breault knew his responsibility was to make the Jesuits as accessible as possible, to break down obstacles that would keep men from realizing the possibility to be a part of that community and life. Further, he noted another important task is to create a diverse picture of the society so that individuals could identify with

³⁴ Breault, "Interview."

³⁵ PJ Williams, "Innovative Vocations Programs for those Discerning," Jesuits USA Northeast Province, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.jesuitseast.org/story?tn=project-20150225112031>.

³⁶ Breault, "Interview."

characters within the order to make this initial connection personal and inviting. It should be welcoming to individuals yet available to all young men.

A Culture of E-vitations

Fr. Thomas H. Smolich, S.J., president of the Jesuit Conference, said that the Jesuits do prioritize responding to growing interest in the Society. “In a world that’s increasingly engaged with technology, we need to be on the front lines, reaching out to young men who are interested in living creatively and generously in service to Christ.”³⁷

Breault keenly realized both the importance of a specific, direct, and consistent message throughout all nine provinces and that the Internet offered the key to widening the scope and sharpening the impact of that message to a large audience—although this happened several years after most organizations and businesses picked up on the trend. In 2014, Breault launched jesuitvocations.org, a consolidated, comprehensive website to represent all nine provinces focused specifically and solely on Jesuit vocations. Finally, those interested in learning more about life as a Jesuit have a one-stop solution to find some answers and clear instructions how to move forward. Of course, the mere existence of a vocations website does not magically solve the challenges the Jesuits face with promotion, but it helps as an essential tool to reach the largest possible audience and facilitate this culture of invitations. The other challenge exists in the personal nature of the vocation process, different and introspective for each candidate. To resonate with individuals, that mass invitation message needs to feel personal and relatable for every man.

Breault, who was responsible for the launch of the site, confirms that creating and selecting the website content has been one of his primary contributions and challenges in his

³⁷ Jesuits News, “Jesuits Launch.”

role. His task to tailor jesuitvocations.org serves two distinct purposes addressing marketing difficulties for Jesuit vocations throughout the country. First, externally, he aims to expand the reach of vocation promotion and availability of the Jesuit life to young men by offering broad and visible yet personal and relatable series of invitations representing all nine provinces. Secondly, he uses this to serve an internal purpose of consolidating the marketing structure and strategy by using the website as a hub to synchronize vocation goals and actions among provinces to increase the effectiveness of their work. The challenge comes from, Breault noted, “balancing the consolidated nature of the structure with fewer provinces while still connecting with individuals to make them feel they have a place for them in the Society.”³⁸ Noted earlier using the New Orleans Province as an example, division of provinces seems to be based on cultural and language differences as opposed to being solely based on geography. So how does one keep and accent the personality of individual provinces and communities despite the now more consolidated structure and centralized message? Seemingly in opposition, these two necessities of the Jesuit invitation inform every piece of content for Breault from the language of the invitation to connect down to the pictures on the home page.

The website is colorful throughout, riddled with photos, embedded videos, maps, charts, and spiritual quotes and vocation catch-phrases framed in digital poster-art.³⁹ It takes the visitor through every aspect of the Jesuit vocation from the initial call and curiosity to the application process to the path to Final Vows. It even has resources for friends and families to better understand what the Society may hold for a loved one in discernment. It is clear, direct, and vibrant, perfect to accomplish the welcoming digital atmosphere that online promotional material should have. The viewer also feels the invitation through the language of its pages, all carefully

³⁸ Breault, “Interview.”

³⁹ “Jesuit Vocations,” Jesuits, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.jesuitvocations.org>.

and intentionally selected. Recognizing the importance of his predecessors work with Google Analytics, Breault took much of those lessons and made sure the language of the website would match the questions men contemplating the religious life would have. He searched for the words these young men were looking for, pinpointing these key words and phrases by scouring a variety of sources including resources from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that dealt with vocational information.

These buzz words make up nearly all of the written content on the Jesuit vocations platform starting with three main page headings: Hear, Answer, Consider. Right out of the gate, the visitor is guided how to interpret God's call with quick, often empathetic or action-oriented statements. "It took a cannonball for Ignatius. What will it take for you?" reads a comic book-style animated quote in the body of the "Answer" page.⁴⁰ As another example, the "Consider" page lists about twenty colorful but ambiguous Jesuit words and catchphrases like "prayerful," "courageous," "vowed lives," and "pursuit of justice" under the page-filling message: "For 500 years the Jesuits have welcomed men like you."⁴¹ Ideally prompting the visitor to inquire further about the Jesuits, they can follow the next set of links in the home bar titled "Spirituality," "Community," "Commitment," "Vision," and "Service" to learn more about religious life in the Society.

Undeniably, the language lacks subtlety altogether. But, then again, the need that a customer feels for religious, community, or spiritual fulfillment differs from, say, a feeling of hunger. It is much more elusive, more confusing, and many customers may not even realize that they are looking for religious life. The Product at hand differs greatly from the Snickers bar, so the style of Promotion differs as well. Some products benefit from subtlety. For the audience, an

⁴⁰ "Answering God's Call," Jesuit Vocations, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.jesuitvocations.org/answer>.

⁴¹ "Considering the Jesuits?" Jesuit Vocations, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.jesuitvocations.org/jesuits>

aggressive Snicker-pushing campaign could conjure up images of the corporate Mars, Inc. bigwigs making chubby children's mouths water over candy bar commercials between Saturday morning cartoons. The Jesuits, on the other hand, must be direct. They want to promote to the young men across the nation that their organization understands the uncertainty of a calling, and they can help them to discern. At the end of the day, the Jesuits are not attempting to trick men into enrolling. After all, the accompaniment and application processes are specifically intended to find a mutual fit between man and Society and to avoid a poor match for either party. They use language to assist and to invite with the hopes that the visitors will use this vocation resource to explore and reflect on whether they can see themselves as Jesuit men.

Creating a Dialogue with the Jesuits: "See Yourself in Us"

Breault truly wants these men to "see" themselves in Jesuit characters and relate to the stories of callings and finding fulfillment through the Society. Breault says the technology and content of the website allows for personalization for each user to cultivate a "lean forward" experience through a series of photos, profiles, and videos to showcase the diversity of the Jesuit community.⁴² Sending a message of diversity, however, remains a difficult task for the Jesuits. According to Breault, their marketing efforts have to compete to dispel stigmas and stereotypes about the Society. He says the old perception of the Jesuits as "white, monolithic, and just for staffing schools" has been an image they have been working to disprove, and he has used these interactive and visual components of the vocations site to change that perspective.⁴³

The Jesuits do show off their diversity, though, through the faces and stories of their online platform. The sheer number of faces you see on the site stands out more than any other

⁴² Breault, "Interview."

⁴³ Ibid.

characteristic. Sure, the brothers pictured on the sight come in all different shapes and colors, creating a picture of an apparently ethnically mixed community standing as brothers-in-arms. Just as important, the displays hint at a diversity of styles, interests, and roles among these men who all belong to the same Society and community. One picture shows a Jesuit priest laden with clerical robes leading a mass while another depicts a Jesuit in casual, secular clothes flying a plane on the same page.⁴⁴ One group of brothers wears their black cassocks and clerical collars while others don t-shirts and sunglasses. A “Meet the Novices” section of the home page displays pictures of each individual in the current Novitiate with a short biography for each when clicked. The 2015 novice class includes a 23-year-old Haitian guitar player, a 45-year old Filipino former software engineer, a 19-year-old Eagle Scout from Milwaukee, and more than forty others. The message here communicates that no one Jesuit mold exists. Rather, a great diversity of personalities, cultures, ethnicities, races, and characters form the Society. A young man can envision himself as one of those unique characters, smiling alongside his novice classmates and soon his Jesuit community members.

It is worth noting that Jesuit Vocations also manage both Instagram and Twitter (@BeAJesuit) accounts since 2014--clearly another initiative of Br. Breault to usher the marketing effort into the modern era. While these do not have the depth of content and information of the vocations site, they have similar spotlights and incorporate a diverse group of faces and stories as well. For instance, for the 2016 Lent season, they launched a #40Jesuits40Days campaign to briefly showcase several Jesuit faces and the variety of jobs, responsibilities, and impacts their brotherhood has.

In addition to these Jesuit faces, a couple of Jesuits with large followings have contributed significantly to the Jesuit brand and are commonly featured in general marketing

⁴⁴ “Community,” Jesuit Vocations, accessed March 28, 2016. <http://www.jesuitvocations.org/life/Community>

materials not necessarily linked to vocations. The Society saw a nice boost in popularity and brand awareness following the election of Pope Francis in 2013.⁴⁵ Since then, Francis, a Jesuit, has skyrocketed in popularity among both Catholics and non-Catholics. It seems that personalities like Francis and James Martin, SJ, would be key resources in attracting people to the Society because of their popularity and presence in popular culture. While these are important men to have in the public eye contributing to the Jesuit brand, Breault noted, much of this appeal and influence misses the target market for the Jesuits. Fr. Martin's fan base, for example, is comprised mostly of middle-aged women—not exactly the group from whom the Jesuit brotherhood hopes to generate vocational interest.⁴⁶ However, their images and even a video of Fr. Martin still appear on the vocations website. These recognizable Jesuits “make the eye linger a little longer” and are very valuable to the society, but they are not central to the vocation promotion strategy.⁴⁷

As discussed, the vocations website features calls to action and resources to learn more about the society while the faces help the visitor to visualize themselves within the Jesuit life. Of course, this is just the tip of the iceberg, one of the first points of touch leading into a personal conversation. Well, the website facilitates that as well, first on a virtual level and then the opportunity to reach out for something more serious.

Naturally considering Br. Breault's background as a filmmaker, the website has no shortage of watchable material. However, not just limited to short montage films, many of the videos on the website are pre-recorded but interactive “chats” with real Jesuits (made possible by digital media company Interlude who have pioneered this sort of game-like video technology) in which you click to choose where the discussion goes, seamlessly. This creates a sort of series of

⁴⁵ Breault, “Interview.”

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

virtual conversations. This great variety of interactive content “allows users to ‘direct’ the conversation by choosing questions on a broad range of topics--from training, ordination and vows to questions about Jesuit spirituality and commitment to social Justice.” Data shows this technology has increased engagement on the website to between 70%-90%.⁴⁸

Of course, all of these elements of the vocations website exist to generate interest and to engage the visitor through the “lean forward” experience to heighten their interest. Ultimately, the goal of all of this effort and intentional content design and selection is to encourage these men to convert on starting a *real* conversation with a Jesuit, likely the province’s vocation promoter. All of these elements--the language, images, video and interactive content--emphasize creating a dialogue. “The website spotlights Jesuits you can meet and talk to directly,” Breault said. He continued that they even included personal lines for many of those brothers along with variations of the same message: “Hey, I am *so-and-so* from *such-and-such* province. Give me a call.” According to Breault, “the website and personal interactions have to have identical language.”⁴⁹ He reinforces this through practically every detail of the website, stating that consistency in the message through both in-person contact and online interaction, highlighting this as an essential component in their promotion strategy. Alternatively, the website features several ways to navigate to the same page: a simple “Contact Us” portal like you might find on any other website. Just leave a name, phone number or e-mail address, street address (so they can identify which province should contact you), birthdate, and a brief message “to get the ball rolling.” That way, a Jesuit will get in touch with you.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Jesuits, “Jesuits Launch.”

⁴⁹ Breault, “Interview.”

⁵⁰ I was unable to verify this promise that the Jesuits will reach out to you through this medium. I attempted to contact my local vocation promoter or director through this portal, not hiding the fact that I was not considering discernment but was looking into this process for research purposes, but I never heard back. While I assume my inquiry was ignored because of this, I cannot be sure that my message did not simply go overlooked or was never

Although not the only important factor in the Jesuit vocation marketing scheme, the vocations website is a huge step in the right direction to create an accessible and personal invitation for men to take the first steps toward discernment and to make it as easy as possible to begin an in-person dialogue with real, eager Jesuits. In addition, this national platform serves the less public but also essential function of helping to communicate a consistent marketing strategy throughout the provinces.

Most importantly, provinces need to continue to engage men within their area and host localized events to serve as in-person points of access. As Breault noted, most of these promotion events are wide invitations to interested people in the area, but Jesuit promoters tailor some events specifically for a particular candidate. They do not want to lose this personal feel of these interactions specific to particular cultures, demographics, or individuals. However, some provinces do outperform others in regard to enrolling men into the novitiate. While it is very possible that demographic differences by geography or size of the potential market skew these numbers, they still want all provinces to be promoting as efficiently and optimally as possible.

Fortunately, a Vocation Promotion Toolkit was developed and published on the vocations website for all Jesuits to access. The Toolkit articulates an overarching approach to vocation promotion and continues with detailed instructions how to act as a promoter of vocations in various communities. It highlights four pillars as the foundation of this strategy called the 4-S Approach: Structural Ideas, Spiritual Programs, Service Events, and Social Activities.⁵¹ Next, it lists specific actions to take under each pillar to create an environment of vocation promotion in Jesuit communities, middle schools, high schools, colleges & universities, theological centers,

seen. The efficacy of the website in its ability to create dialogue with interested men is largely dependent upon Jesuit follow through on the back end of this communication.

⁵¹ “Vocational Promotion Toolkit,” Jesuit Vocations, accessed March 28, 2016, http://jesuitvocations.org/Assets/Publications/File/VOCATION_TOOLKIT_v2.pdf.

first studies programs, parishes, retreat centers, retirement communities, and even infirmaries. Providing thorough resources like this for Jesuits allows the Society to truly make it possible for all of its brothers to participate and engage as promoters, expanding the reach of personal impact more than a website can accomplish.

Despite all of these great strides, Breault still senses some resistance from these explicit promotion efforts and modernized marketing strategy. One particular area of resistance was for more sophisticated and specific data collection to pinpoint the demographics promotion efforts that have the greatest success to establish specific target markets. The vocation teams had to be very discrete about this, he said, because many Jesuits are very sensitive about privacy. Still, data collection may be the future for the Jesuits to truly complete their understanding of their target markets. In addition to meeting with directors and promoters to discuss these sort of questions about what works in their provinces and who they are reaching, Breault even discussed plans to assemble focus groups to discuss data collection to gain further insights specifically based on ethnicity and increasing the Society's ethnic diversity. In fact, they did have success, he remarked, with first generation Vietnamese immigrants in particular—although many of them came from one particular parish—so this may not be an interested demographic looking beyond this sample.⁵² In fact, this example highlights the efficacy of vocation promotion when a strong parish community exists. As stated earlier, parishes in the first half of the 20th century were integral to the community, anchoring Catholics in specific Catholic neighborhoods. Although America faced a steep decline of its parishes beginning in the 1960s, these parishes were critical

⁵² Breault, "Interview."

to push children into parochial schools and the church community and were often rooted in and strengthened by racial, ethnic, or cultural identity.⁵³

This thorough discussion regarding a website in 2016 may seem unnecessary, but its creation has actually been a huge leap in a positive direction for Jesuit vocations. The Society has been forced to adapt, but they have been largely ignoring the most crucial resource to reach audiences today for about two decades. Today, there are over 3.3 billion Internet users worldwide, a constantly growing number since the introduction of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s. People are more connected and informed than ever in history, all made possible by the existence of the Internet. It is the voice of the people. So, why are Jesuits seemingly so far behind the curve of using it to their advantage and to the advantage of their mission? Now, we are witnessing a spirited and important catch-up effort in the Society of Jesus thanks to the national directors of vocation promotion since 2009, Fr. Ballecer and Br. Breault, and the increasing awareness of Church and Jesuit leaders of the need for a more focused effort of invitations in the clergy and religious life. In the next chapter, we will explore why this adoption of technology as a medium for communication is inherently Jesuit and Ignatian and why it is ironic that the Society has been behind the curve for so long.

⁵³ John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10-11, 20, 62, 104-105.; Robert Anthony Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

Chapter II - *Inflamte Omnia* - Vocation Promotion as a Reflection of Jesuit Thought and Values

“Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam (For the Greater Glory of God)”

“The world is our house.”

Developing the Missionary Spirit

As outlined in the *Formula Vivendi* written by early Jesuits in 1539, the purpose of the Society of Jesus is, “the progress of souls in Christian life and the doctrine and propagation of the faith.”⁵⁴ In other words, those first followers of Ignatius were announcing to the world that their new order was a Society of missionaries serving a Christian ministry. They considered themselves “ministers of the word of God,” bringing the Bible message to all, near or far, as missionaries. This began as preaching in both religious and public spaces. Soon it evolved into a series “sacred lectures” about books of the Bible and topics of faith, catechesis, and even printed texts thanks to Ignatius’s purchase of a printing press in 1556.⁵⁵

Before long, it became obvious that the Jesuit ministry went beyond the Word--it was a ministry of action including, “any other works of charity according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good.”⁵⁶ They established their community with an identity of missions, differentiating from monastic lifestyles. In the early years of the Society, many confused them for monks. No, these were men of the people, of the community, traveling where they were needed, performing corporal works of mercy, administering sacraments, listening as confessors, and of course, founding schools. A spirit that remains today, Jesuits consider themselves in partnership with People of God, not just those in the brotherhood.

⁵⁴ O’Malley, *Jesuits*, 17.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 21-23.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

Similar to many mendicant orders, Jesuits take three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Unique to this society of missionaries, however, is a fourth vow of obedience (to the Pope) in regard to missions. “Missions here clearly meant itinerant ministry, or ministry ‘throughout the world’ for the ‘greater help of souls.’”⁵⁷ O’Malley calls this the “principle foundation” of the society, encapsulating the Jesuits as non-monastic, ministry-focused characters and actors. Indeed, the Jesuits are men prepared to be sent into the world to, “hurry to any part of the world where...the needs of the neighbor should summon them.”⁵⁸ With this spirit, the Jesuits emerged as innovators and pioneers to create a global network and access the language of culture to fulfill their ministry.

The Jesuits were trailblazers, contributing to globalization in an age of discovery and colonial expansion. They were adventurers, earning a reputation of men of constant travel willing to go to great lengths to bring their ministry to the whole world. As their network expanded, Jesuits separated into provinces and assistancies, soon becoming one of the first institutions to have a presence on every continent—including the New World. Soon, they had constructed an information network reaching every continent—essentially creating one of the original worldwide webs.⁵⁹

Not only pioneering new global networks, Jesuits were pioneers, disruptors, and trendsetters as teachers of the Gospel. They became known for their public meeting, street corner preaching, lectures, and schools. They utilized the technologies and resources of the day, no matter how simple or complex, to spread their work to the masses. For example, Jesuits teaching children about the Word would put biblical lessons to popular tunes to help them learn. They

⁵⁷ John W. O’Malley, SJ, *The First Jesuits*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 228-229.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 18-19.

⁵⁹ Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 193-197.

even installed printing press in colleges to bring lessons and copies of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* and other Jesuit letters to the world as early as 1552.⁶⁰

Once on the cutting edge, the Jesuits now lag as an order slow to adjust to modern trends through their vocational promotion. This is not due to ignorance in the Society about today's technologies and popular culture. On the contrary, Jesuits are still leaders in communication, media, and education, especially in the United States. Jesuits own and run "America," for example, that serves as an organizer and facilitator for Catholic conversation and communication throughout the country. Its publication, *America Magazine*, claims to be the leading Catholic review in the United States and the country's only weekly Catholic publication covering topics across the spectrum relevant to faith and culture. America has developed radio content, films, plans events, and publishes books. They have embraced a variety of digital platforms, offering written content for e-readers, blogs, and social media in addition to publishing regular videos and podcasts, as well. The Jesuits even have resources devoted to engaging young adults (e.g. The Jesuit Press), film production organizations (e.g. Loyola Productions), and so many other entities under their umbrella.

All of these seem like great ways to engage the public, and even specifically to engage potential candidates. These resources and activities truly align with the Jesuit missionary spirit, bringing their ministry to the world through a variety of mediums and methods. For this reason, it is so surprising that this innovative spirit has been so slow to transfer to the vocational marketing side of the Society. Perhaps we can attribute this to the resistance to ideas associated with "recruitment" or "marketing" while relying on a more ethereal "calling" to draw men in. Whatever the reason, the missionary ethos--to engage with people of the world by whatever

⁶⁰ Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 197.

means necessary--appears uncharacteristically lacking in this facet of Jesuit work until very recent years.

Now as the vocational side of this pioneering Jesuit spirit catches up to the times, a new spark, evidenced by the work of Br. Breault and his predecessor, to make invitations to vocation a priority has arisen. Calls from the Church and US bishops have dictated a new mission for Jesuits. They are effectively “sent” as men of missions to tap into a world beyond their institution. This time, though, their ministry does not provide lessons of God’s Word, but rather provides answers to God’s Call. Just like the first missions of the 16th century, Jesuits are going out into the world and learning the language of the people. This time, they are learning to speak a digital language tailored to the 21st century. This digital language means interacting with individuals in the place where *they* are: in a connected world. It means utilizing the available technologies and resources of the day to communicate a message of invitation. Further, the Jesuit missionary ethos suggests that they would become masters of this communication, paving the way as an example for other religious communities. Discovering the most effective way to relate and interact with the population is precisely what the founding Jesuits would do, uninhibited by old precedent and inviting to progress, leading the Catholic culture of invitation with an acute understanding of today’s global culture in today’s globalized world.

Go Forth, and Set the World on Fire

At the society continued to grow, the Jesuit missionaries developed a culture of speaking the language of their audience in both a literal and a figurative sense. The Jesuits would certainly learn the local languages in order to communicate properly with a variety of societies, but it was their adoption and embrace of those respective cultures that made them stand out. Several, key

Jesuit figures were instrumental in shaping the legacy and spirit of “enculturation” (alternatively spelled “inculturation,” especially in context of Catholic liturgies) in the Society. As missionaries, they spread the Gospel message to geographies, but uniquely as Jesuits, they truly made it relevant and resonant within those cultures.

Enculturation is a term to define the process of learning the ways and values of a culture by ways of conscious or unconscious conditioning.⁶¹ In reference to Christianity, it often refers to the appropriation of Christian liturgy to non-Christian cultural background. Although the word itself is a more modern term, it especially applicable to the Jesuit process in their early international missions. The idea of missionaries adopting non-European customs to improve communication with an understanding of a God-less society was revolutionary for the 16th century. Thanks to several key individuals, the Jesuits became something of ambassadors to these civilizations and exemplars of empathy.

At first, cultural and language barriers proved to be an obstacle for Jesuits on missions to evangelize non-European areas, but the young and passionate men of the Society were quick to attack this challenge head on. José de Anchieta, a Basque teenager and one of the first Jesuits sent to the New World in Brazil, shines as an example of this movement. A talented linguist and creative teacher, Anchieta began to learn the Tupi language of the Brazilian people by attempting to record their words and usage in the Latin characters familiar to him. With a loose grasp on the dialect before long, he translated Christian beliefs into the native language. Noting their fantastic musical aptitude as a culture, he put these ideas to local tunes, as well.⁶²

Sometimes this kind of creative thinking and cultural understanding was even essential on a political level as Jesuits were thrown into the role of ambassadors for the Western world.

⁶¹ J. A. Simpson et al. ed., *The Oxford English Dictionary: Second Edition*, vol. 5, “Enculturation”, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁶² O’Malley, *The Jesuits*, 22-23.

Francis Xavier, a contemporary of Ignatius and one of the most remembered and famous early Jesuits, was the first priest to open a mission in Japan in 1549. Appreciating the Japanese culture, he understood he would need the approval of a person of great influence. So, he substituted his priestly clothing for fine, Japanese robes and approached a daimyo, or powerful, feudal lord, named Ouchi Yoshitaka in his court. At their meeting, he offered Yoshitaka several fine, European gifts as a showing of respect and goodwill. This was clearly received well by the Japanese lord since he responded by allowing Xavier usage of an old, empty Buddhist temple where he established his mission. Impressed by the approval, Xavier received from a man of honor and influence, locals began to engage with the Jesuits and receive their message. Xavier, it turns out, was impressed by them, too, and their, “marvelous sense of honor and self esteem.”⁶³ These actions were much more significant than making Catholic liturgies entertaining and memorable. This display of respect and of an in-depth understanding of local customs and etiquette was essential both to gaining access to the local public and to engender a sense of trust of the Jesuits within the community.

Once Jesuits paved the way for missions in non-European cultures, like Anchieta and Xavier’s missions to the Japan and the Indies, others began to immerse themselves fully into these foreign societies by adopting customs, learning languages, taking jobs, and even studying their existing religious or spiritual beliefs and cultural values. Thirty years later, another young Jesuit by the name of Alessandro Valignano would go even a step further. With great admiration for the sophistication of Japanese culture, Valignano instructed that the Jesuits should fully invest themselves into the local way of life. They began eating like the Japanese, dressing like them, and even practicing their customs. They opened up a Japanese Novitiate to begin constructing a base of local clergy and consequently a distinctly Japanese Jesuit identity. This

⁶³ O’Malley, *The Jesuits*. 48-49.

identity contributed not only to social customs and eating habits, but also to art and expression. Jesuits in Japan even built churches in the local style, borrowing from Buddhist architecture and influences incorporating gardens and fishponds among other distinctly Japanese elements.⁶⁴

A few thousand miles away, other Jesuits were doing similar work in other cultures. These actions of enculturation pioneered the notion that for a person to be a Christian, they did not necessarily have to be European. Roberto De Nobili, an Italian Jesuit in South India, actively fought to debunk the idea that Christian and Western were synonymous. He became one of the first Europeans to learn Tamil and supposedly the first to write a theological treatise in an Indian language.⁶⁵ He changed his entire lifestyle to adopt that of a Hindu holy man in protest to the then policy of forcing converts to adopt European names and customs.

Perhaps the man most commonly associated with the idea of enculturation, Matteo Ricci, along with fellow Italian Jesuit Michele Ruggieri, arrived in Macao in China sent as an assignment from Alessandro Valignano. By 1583, they had mastered classical Chinese as a written and spoken language as well as Chinese literature and settled in the country.⁶⁶ Like many other Jesuits in years before, Ricci adopted local dress and customs, but Ricci had a special influence on the Chinese as more than a European missionary. Ricci, a gifted cartographer and brilliant mathematician, soon elevated to the mandarin elite social class. Thanks to his many talents, he became a trusted adviser to the Chinese court and produced elaborate maps for the Wan Li emperor.⁶⁷ His contributions vaulted him to favor with the Emperor and the gratitude of the Chinese. While Matteo's brilliance in the arts and sciences left a lasting impact on China, arguably his most important contribution comes from his attempts to identify and communicate

⁶⁴ O'Malley, *The Jesuits*, 49-50.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 52.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 51.

⁶⁷ Sheila Melvin, "Missionary to the Forbidden City," *New York Times*, September 27, 2010, accessed March 28, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/28/arts/28iht-melvin.html?_r=0.

important similarities between the Confucian philosophy and Christianity. For the Chinese, Confucius was not only a philosopher, his teachings were the foundation of Chinese thought and culture and they even practiced Confucianism in ritual ways. This effort to reconcile Christianity and contrasting Chinese rites in a Confucian worldview and ultimately failed and his ideas were later subject of a controversy in the European world.

Although Jesuit practices to enculturate Christian teachings were not always well received or successful, they are indicative of the character of the Jesuits as boundary pushers and incredible, immersed communicators. So driven by their mission, they felt the need to do whatever necessary to spread their message. Demonstrating great empathy, respect, and understanding of cross-cultural challenges, they laid their European identity aside to truly speak the language of the local culture, to live within that culture among the people, and to teach but also to learn from them. In the process, they fundamentally changed the perception what it meant to be a Christian, and therefore, unlocked great insight into how to better relate, teach, and evangelize by the “compassionate witness of self-sacrifice.”⁶⁸

While a charismatic few pioneered enculturation of the Gospel, this practice reflected Ignatian spirituality particularly as a manifestation of the ideal of *cura personalis*. *Cura personalis*, meaning “care for the entire person” in Latin, can be understood as “the attention and respect given to the care of the individual person and that person’s soul.”⁶⁹ This tenet speaks to the importance of learning from others, appreciating them, and having meaningful and thoughtful interactions with humankind. It is especially important to the Jesuit pillars of service and community and essential to the impact of Jesuit missions. Unlike the Protestant evangelical rhetoric that all non-Europeans were savages and infidels needing to be saved, Jesuit care for

⁶⁸ Catharine Randall, “Cura Personalis: Recognizing Christ in the Other” from *Black Robes and Buckskin: A Selection from the Jesuit Relations* (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2010).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

individuals created an atmosphere of compassion and mutual learning. Not only does this sound like a much more idealistic approach to evangelization, it was actually more persuasive and compelling than Protestant efforts.⁷⁰

The goal to “find God in all things” stands out as another guiding principle of Ignatian spirituality important to the Jesuit missionary identity. This instruction from Ignatius to the early Jesuits would become the very basis of all Ignatian spirituality, and therefore, a key fundamental of Jesuit identity and practice. Jesuits believe God is active in the world in the most seemingly mundane ways and things. Our spiritual journey, then, is to search for him, or discern his presence, around us. Matteo Ricci, for instance, found God even in another worldview of Confucianism. He wrestled with it and learned from its people, discerning the synthesis of two opposing beliefs. This and openness and willingness to discern is inherently Jesuit, which explains why Ricci and Jesuits who find God in other cultures are so admired within the Society.

Jesuit spirituality, values, and practices combine to paint a complicated but comprehensive image to describe Jesuit identity. The Society is based on a culture of care for individuals, of being sent out into the world, of discerning God’s presence in all things, of learning and empathy, and of exploration, innovation, pushing boundaries and adventure. Exemplified by many early Jesuits on international missions, this culture and these ideologies come to life through Jesuit action. Further, it’s what empowers the Jesuits as missionaries to be successful.

Fortunately for the Jesuits, their missionary spirit and culture of enculturation remains incredibly relevant to vocation promotion. All of the characteristics and principles that made Jesuits successful as early missionaries still apply hundreds of years later. Now, they are being

⁷⁰ Randall argues for comparative Jesuits success specifically in New France (Indies) in the early 1600s. Randall, “Cura Personalis”.

sent not on an evangelical mission, but to create a culture of invitations in a connected world. Making strides to learn the language of discerning men, to utilize that language and to tailor their message for a digital platform demonstrates Jesuit enculturation efforts to connect with men in the digital age. This exemplifies care for the individual through their organized actions to create personalized content, encourage a real one-on-one dialogue, and guide men through the accompaniment process, teaching them to find God in all things. These practices set them up for success in regard to vocation promotion. Further, men who hold these ideals will be drawn to the Jesuit community and spirituality as reflected not only on the surface level of their content but because of the compassionate nature of the invitation, as well.

Jesuits in Modern America

While the ethos of the Jesuit was a missionary continues today, we must also recognize what has changed and shaped the Jesuit identity specifically in America today. While America went through a period of several “revolutions” in the 1960s, the American Catholic population had its own timeline and significant events for revolution, Massa claims.⁷¹ Beginning with the first election of the first Catholic president, Catholicism thrust into the mainstream of America. John F. Kennedy remains to this day the only non-protestant president in United States history. His campaign and election served to lead the country into a new era of a more secularized state, and his later assassination and glorification presented a Catholic American as the hero revered the national stage for decades to come.⁷² Also in the decade, Notre Dame began to emerge as a leader in American higher education. A notable football school since the 1920s, Notre Dame had

⁷¹ Mark S. Massa, SJ, *The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xi-xvi.

⁷² Mark S. Massa, *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day, and the Notre Dame Football Team*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2001), 128-147.

become highly regarded as an elite academic institution by the 1960s. Of course, their Catholic identity shone on a national level as an integral part of the school's identity and culture entering the popular culture of the nation as a result of the football team's popularity and the high regard for the University's religious and academic tradition.⁷³

As Catholicism entered the American conscious during the 60s, the American Catholics began to rift from the Church leadership for a variety of reasons. For one, the decade saw the decline of the parish, as discussed earlier. The other important phenomenon that occurred was the introduction of birth control contraceptives to the American public. The Pill changed the way Americans talked about and engaged in sex sparking a sexual revolution in the country. Consequently, the Vatican addressed the issue with Pope Paul IV's *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, an encyclical rejecting most forms of birth control asserting they violated the "natural law" and the sanctity of life.⁷⁴ However, Vatican opposition did little to stifle American usage of the pill and other contraceptives, a reality that still exists today. A 2014 Gallup poll suggested that 86% of American Catholics deemed contraception "morally permissible" compared to a national 90% and actually even more receptive to sex outside of marriage at 72% acceptance to a national 66%.⁷⁵ This issue emphasizes the divide between Catholics and the clergy at this time, parishioners were no longer taking all Church decisions as Gospel. From the papal perspective, a "collapse of the facts" was occurring as nearly 2000 years of Church teaching on life was being contradicted in American society. But no matter the perspective, the entire landscape for

⁷³ Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, 195-200, 203-212.

⁷⁴ Massa, *American Catholic History*, 165-169.

⁷⁵ Frank Bruni, "Be Fruitful, Not Bananas," *New York Times*, January 25, 2015, accessed April 27, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/25/opinion/sunday/frank-bruni-pope-francis-birth-control-and-american-catholics.html?_r=0.

American Catholicism had changed dramatically, and that American Catholic identity has largely continued to the present day.⁷⁶

In the midst of this change of Catholicism in American culture, the Jesuits also developed a newer reputation as an order opening up to liberation theology and far to the left of the Catholic spectrum. With missions throughout South and Central America, the Jesuits staffed schools and hospitals, serving the middle classes of several nations. This sentiment made its way into North America as well culminating with Jesuit bishops emphasizing and urging “solidarity with the poor.” This focus shapes what defines the current American Jesuit identity. Without losing the missionary spirit, their ministry had changed to become “men for others” as companions and advocates in service to the most marginalized, and consequently, critics of capitalism.⁷⁷

Today, the Jesuit reputation persist as the liberals of the Catholic Church, especially in an American Catholicism somewhat distant, geographically and ideologically, from the Vatican. This idea has even been apparent in today’s national and global news. Many more conservative Catholics including *New York Times* writer Ross Douthat consider Pope Francis, a Jesuit and “progressive” according to many, for example, something of a heretic.⁷⁸ Like the Jesuits, Pope Francis has aligned himself with the poor and, some would say, made compromises for Catholic teaching to create a more inclusive Church. Social justice ideals for the Jesuits also come to life through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, or JVC, the largest Catholic full-time volunteer program in the world.⁷⁹ They have pioneered the service landscape for over forty years, again highlighting

⁷⁶ Massa, *The American Catholic Revolution*, 36-42.

⁷⁷ John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 270-272.

⁷⁸ Ross Douthat, “The Plot to Change Catholicism,” *New York Times*, October 18, 2015, accessed April 27, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/18/opinion/sunday/the-plot-to-change-catholicism.html>

⁷⁹ Jesuit Volunteer Corps, “History”, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, 2015, accessed April 27, 2016, <http://jesuitvolunteers.org/history/>.

the Jesuits as trailblazers of mission and ministry. Beginning in early 1970 and still operational today, JVC represents the new Jesuit American identity of the 1960s come manifest.

Vocation marketing for the Jesuits should be, and is making great strides to become, a true reflection of both the Ignatian missionary spirit that has been exemplified by the greatest Jesuits throughout their 500-year history and the more recent social justice emphasis of the Society. Sending out invitations to “come and see” the Society by communicating through the medium and language of a globalized culture in the digital age continues the legacy of the Jesuits as a forward-thinking religious order oriented around serving people above all else. Embracing these values in the modern age does more than cast the widest net, it captures the most important audience—those who share these values for adventure and service that may prove the best fit with the society.

As a reflection of Jesuit spirit, this approach to vocation marketing also has implications for the “target market” for the Society of Jesus. In order to more clearly articulate what this target market looks like, we must consider these distinct characteristics of what makes the Jesuit identity truly unique. This is no easy task given the complicated nature of a spiritual calling and elusive characteristics of what it means for individuals to find religious fulfillment. However, segmenting populations and scrutinizing over “customer” attributes, as well as considering both the external (United States and Canada) and internal (Jesuit community) environment, can help to more clearly articulate which markets most need an invitation and, therefore, can inform how to optimize a marketing strategy geared toward reaching them.

Chapter III – Discerning Priorities: Clarifying the Jesuit Vocational Marketing Strategy

Let us attempt to critically analyze the Jesuit existing marketing strategy in regard to vocation promotion.⁸⁰ Now, we can expand upon some of the marketing fundamentals mentioned in the introduction and first chapter. Among other analyses, we will evaluate the Society of Jesus as both a “company” and a “product”, and attempt to segment an elusive market, and dig deeper into available data.

The implementations of a marketing strategy aims to arrange priorities in the most efficient way for an organization. Marketing should dictate strategic decisions that impact bringing value to a customer, so good companies prioritize at every step. “The markets in which you compete, the part of the value chain upon which you focus, the set of customers you target, the alignment of tactics that support that strategy, and the allocation of resources to support it are all decisions you need to make with the *right priorities* in mind.”⁸¹

External Environment

A comprehensive marketing strategy has to take several factors into account including external environment. While marketing for a corporation that relies on customers to pay money for its product would be more inclined to focus on the economic and business landscapes, let us focus more attention on the religious environment instead.

⁸⁰ Throughout the chapter, I use a series of steps to analyze the marketing strategy for Jesuit vocations. This process I follow is developed and taught by Dr. William Putsis at the University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler business school.

⁸¹ William Putsis, *Compete Smarter, Not Harder: A Process for Developing the Right Priorities Through Strategic Thinking* (Hoboken: Wiley & Sons, 2014), 10.

Catholic Environment

2015 saw the number of parishes in the United States at a fifty-year low with 17,337 Catholic parishes compared to 19,335 twenty years earlier in 1995. That number peaked in the country in 1990, but data shows a steady decline since. According to data from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 20% of parishes in 2015 did not have a resident priest or pastor compared to only 11% in 1990. This data correlates with the trends of a shrinking American priesthood (see Chapter I). In contrast, the number of Catholics in the country has increased from 57.4 million to 68.1 million from 1995 to 2015.⁸² This shows that despite a growing Catholic population, the priesthood and ordained religious life cannot seem to keep up. Although the pool is apparently larger, fewer men are entering the priesthood and religious life.

The American Catholic identity changed dramatically in the 1960s with the decline of the parish—once the stronghold of Catholic life in the country—and distance from clerical leadership in the Church. Of course, this shift presents a challenge for the Jesuit recruitment efforts.

Economic, Political, and Technological Environment

For a brief consideration of the external environment beyond the Catholic faith, the United States economy has largely recovered since a 2008 recession. The American political climate, however, is charged in the midst of an election year presidential campaign.

Americans are more connected to information and each other now than ever before. The last (approx.) ten years have seen skyrocketing popularity of smart phones, social media platforms, streaming services, and other internet-based technologies that are accessible to most people in the United States.

⁸² CARA, “Frequently Requested Church Statistics.”

Brief Company Profile

Because we have discussed the Jesuits in details in other parts of this essay, we will not spend much time on describing them here. However, understanding the principle characteristics and current status of the organization is important to consider for a comprehensive marketing strategy. The strategy has to compliment the organization's "core capabilities" and communicate the most important aspect of its product.

Founded in the mid-1500s, the Society of Jesus is an all-male Catholic religious order made up of both ordained priests and brothers. The Society identifies largely with Ignatian Spirituality that guides its mission and the identity of the brotherhood and its members. Jesuits take four vows for full initiation into the Society: poverty, chastity, obedience, and a fourth vow of obedience in regard to missions. Jesuits are missionaries and were pioneers behind an approach of enculturation to evangelize and serve their ministry throughout the world.

The Jesuits face a shortage of members, a number that has quite steadily declined over the last several decades. Known for their educational institutions, Jesuit-run secondary schools and colleges/universities were once the primary conduit for young men entering into the Novitiate. As the Society has shrunk, it has faced difficulty staffing its many schools with Jesuits, so this lack of personal contact has hurt recruitment efforts. These recruitment efforts are locally organized through seven provinces (and two in Canada), but efforts have been made to unite these strategies and efforts in recent years.

A common brand perception of the Society defines Jesuits as a white, monolithic order exclusively involved in schools. The marketing team is working on combatting this image, placing particular attention on increasing ethnic diversity and showcasing the spectrum of

characters and personalities that make up the community. Jesuits are also regarded as liberalist Catholics emphasizing service as its primary ministry.

Please see chapter two for a more in depth look at the history, identity, and foundations of spirituality for the Jesuits. These are integral both to the company and to their product.

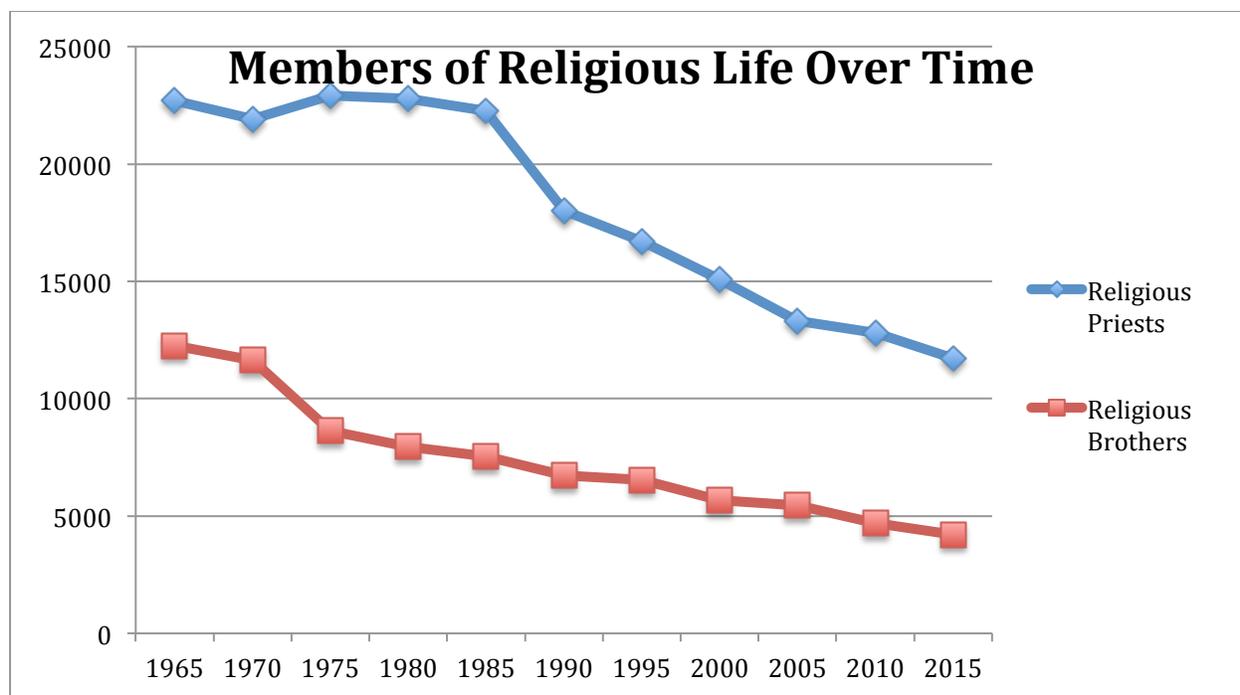
Product

The Society's "product" is life as a Jesuit. The product applies to unmarried men with no dependents, and two distinct product variations exist: brothers or scholastics. Men enter the Novitiate, the beginning of a series of steps along a "formation" path either to enter the society as a brother or to seek ordination (scholastics) after several years. Final vows enter the man in formation into the community as a full member or Jesuit, a lifelong commitment.

Market Analysis

Analyzing the market can help to present a fuller picture of what the subject organization has to consider. For instance, whether it is growing or shrinking, whether there are important trends in the market to recognize, or any major disruptions have arisen in the market in recent years.

The Society of Jesus competes in the market of "Catholic religious life" and careers alternative to religious life. While there are other religious orders of that faith active in the United States and Canada, the Jesuits are one of the largest players. Further, although likely some "competition" exists between these orders to attract capable men considering religious life, the nature of the market emphasizes personal and individual fit with an order.



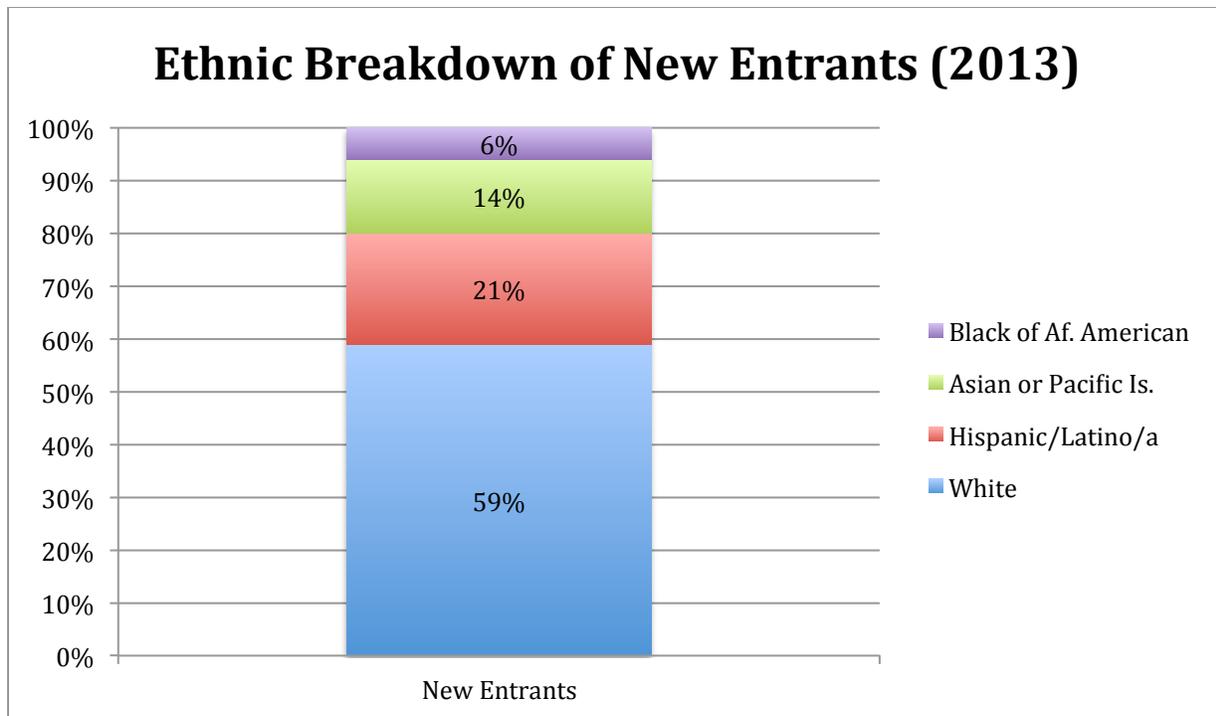
The above graph represents the numbers of religious priests and religious brothers in the United States from 1965 to 2015.⁸³

The Jesuits are not the only religious to face a decline in numbers. Both the numbers of brothers and of priests in Catholic religious orders in the United States have significantly declined since 1965.

Most Catholic religious institutes are far smaller than the Jesuits. 2013 data suggested that only about 20% of religious institutes have more than five members in formation. In contrast, the Jesuits currently have 78 in the Novitiate, the state encapsulating only the first two years of the formation process. As a whole, in 2009, there were over 2,600 men and women in religious formation in the United States (with a retention rate of about 50%) with more than half of that number being male.⁸⁴

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ NRVS, "Vocations to Religious Life Fact Sheet," National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC), February 2013, accessed March 28, 2016.



The above graph represents the breakdown of new entrants into religious life in 2013.⁸⁵

The market is also diversifying ethnically and racially. While 94% of those professed to religious life in the country as of 2013 self-identify as white, surveys show newer entrants will have a greater non-white presence as reflected in the chart above. New entrants are also well educated with over 70% having earned a bachelor’s degree. Data also suggests that student loan debts are a challenge for at least one third of applicants, however.⁸⁶

While the religious order market can hypothetically be any man or woman called to seek that life (depending on the requirements of the order), a “core market” does exist as the primary and most attractive portion of the market for companies—or in this case, religious orders—to pursue. Overall, the market is small and fragmented by several small religious orders, but the Society towers as one of the largest players with a significant scale advantage over other organizations.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Core market

Much of the data about those already involved in religious life or currently in formation tells us a lot about the core market. Current “users” can serve as great indicators for what future users might look like while paying close attention to the current market trends.

The demographic data of current individuals in formation suggests white, Catholic males who attended a four-year college and have never married are most likely to enter a Catholic religious order. Studies show that new entrants today are optimistic, tolerant, and have positive attitudes to authority. Also, people who have had personal interaction with a member of religious life through Catholic school, friendships, or through personal invitation are much more likely to seriously consider a religious vocation. A survey study shows potential ordinands in religious life were more likely to be educated in Catholic school with elementary school, high school, and college percentages for the surveyed sample reporting 51%, 43%, and 45% respectively (compared to a US Catholic population average of 42%, 22%, and 7%).⁸⁷ All of this implies that the core markets for male religious life is that of white, highly educated, tolerant men who had some sort of Catholic education or a personal familiarity with a priest or brother in religious life.

Of course, the total addressable market for religious orders expands to a much broader and more diverse population than that of this picture we have painted of the “core market”. But, identifying this faction allows us to understand and address the specific populaces that are often looking to be reached out to in this market—who does the market address first?

⁸⁷ NRVC, “Statistics on Recent Vocations to Religious Life and Ordained Ministry,” National Religious Vocation Conference, 2015, accessed March 28, 2016, https://nrvc.net/ckeditor_assets/attachments/2559/statisticsonrecentvocations_2015_hires.pdf.

Core Capabilities

Now that we have a clearer vision of the market landscape, it's time to dig into what the Jesuits do best. Core capabilities highlight what makes them distinct from other organizations and what makes them stand out from a consumer standpoint:

Vast Educational Network. The Jesuits have been founding schools around the world since the first years of the Society in the mid 1500s. In the US alone, there are 28 Jesuit colleges and as many as 60 high schools. Schools are an essential element of the Jesuit brand in the United States, increasing awareness of the Jesuits far beyond just the Catholic community (e.g. college basketball fans recognize Georgetown or Marquette as Jesuit universities). Even as Jesuit presence at these schools has decreased, the institutions themselves have continued to prosper as strong academic performers. They carry a strong tradition of forming “men and women for others,” emphasizing character formation in addition to academic excellence in Jesuit schools.

Commitment to Service and Missionary Identity. As a central attribute of the Society since its founding, Jesuits embrace the world as their home. The “fourth vow” and enthusiasm to “go forth and set the world on fire” distinguish the Jesuits as a community of excitement and the lifestyle as having great possibility for adventure. In the early days of the society, Jesuits proved themselves as innovative thinkers and impactful evangelists through a spirit of enculturation and a likeness for empathy. Today, they are recognized as leaders for service and companions to the most marginalized as “men for others.”

Ignatian Spirituality. Other communities and educational institutions beyond those of the Jesuits recognize the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola as important and helpful practices for reflection and meditation. Spiritual life is a key component of religious life for those

discerning, so the Ignatian call to “find God in all things” makes a large impact on both Jesuits and candidates on accompaniment. Further, the Jesuit values founded on principles of Ignatian spirituality permeate and influence all of the characteristics of the Society and their practices.

Core capabilities are the central attributes of the company that “enable a company to produce the attributes that customers seek out and value.” Ideally, organizations will construct themselves based on these attributes that customers want. Instead of designating products based on what the company excels at, the company should tailor itself to develop the capabilities to best deliver on these attributes. “A company must first concentrate on the qualities of amenities that customers value and then develop core competencies that deliver these key attributes.”⁸⁸ Further, the company should deliver these attributes and establish a competitive advantage in the process.

Unfortunately, it is not quite that simple for a religious order. Differing from strategy in most for-profit organizations, the preferences of customer in this case do not necessarily align with what the organization wants to deliver. More simply, the order is not crafting its core capabilities to the qualities of this customer—the potential candidate—it is delivering to a third party. While the Jesuits do want to create a united community and strong internal spiritual identity, their ultimate goal is to remain dedicated to the “greater glory of God,” usually in their ministry of service to others.

This presents one of the great challenges of constructing a marketing strategy for Jesuit vocation promotion. Sure, the core capabilities of the Society draw in many men. However, because the primary goal of the organization is not to align competencies with candidate desires, the marketing strategy is inherently suboptimal. Fortunately, the Jesuits are in a similar boat as most if not all of its “competitors” in religious life, which also dedicate themselves to religious

⁸⁸ Putsis, *Compete Smarter*, 23.

goals of some form. Still, the Jesuits do not tailor themselves to the most attractive segment of candidates, so we can instead use these capabilities to nail down what demographics would find these characteristics inspiring.

Value Chain

Another piece of the marketing strategy puzzle, value extraction along the value chain, also does not fully apply to the Jesuits. Most organizations operate in some part of a value chain, which follows the process of bringing a product from raw material to a market-ready product, and those organizations need to prioritize where to compete along that chain to maximize value extracted (often bargaining power or the largest margins). In the case of the Jesuits, the value chain of the product of “Jesuit” is difficult if not impossible to define. For one, there are no other players in developing the product, save maybe God and the Church—although I imagine that the Jesuits consider themselves all a part of the same team. Further, the value to be extracted is not a monetary one. Ideally the Society, the Church, and the world benefit from the growth of the Jesuit order. So, without a clear chain or value to win, Jesuits cannot easily prioritize. Though, without doubt, God must have the value extraction advantage somewhere along that chain.

Strategic Control Points

Strategic control points are “areas of the market of value chain that, if owned or controlled, allow firm to extract greater margins and control other parts of the opportunity space.”⁸⁹ If organizations can establish control points, it blocks competitors from copying some differentiating component of their product or operations and in turn secures competitive

⁸⁹ Putsis, *Compete Smarter*, 36.

advantage, at least for a while. The Jesuits have one, key strategic control point, and actually, they established it hundreds of years ago: schools.

The Jesuits have a huge network of schools, which, in addition to contributing to a mission of education for the Society, seemingly breeds entrants for the religious life. Although Br. Breault acknowledged the Jesuits can no longer rely on their school system solely to reach potential candidates, Catholic and Jesuit schools are still incredibly effective in bringing men to the religious life in comparison to the general population. The numbers are staggering: 44% of ordinands attended a Catholic college compared to 7% of the US Catholic population.⁹⁰ Based on my own analysis using profile information available on the Jesuit vocations website, 26% of the current Jesuit Novitiate (2014 and 2015 classes) in the US and Canada attended a Jesuit high school and 23% attended a Jesuit college.⁹¹ Note that these figures do not include other non-Jesuit Catholic schools. Clearly, the school pipeline can still serve as a powerful tool for Jesuit vocation promotion.

On the flip side, this control point offers a very interesting hook for a specific segment of men interested in religious life. For men who are both passionate about teaching and considering religious life, the Jesuit seems to be a no-brainer as the go-to first stop for discernment. Data seems to support that conclusion as well. Again based on public profiles of current novices, 22% of the current novitiate has had previous, serious teaching experience (i.e. not tutoring). In fact 12 out of 25 men in the 2015 class had experience as either full time teachers or long-term catechists.

⁹⁰ Tim Muldoon, "College Experience and Priesthood" (a summary report of the 2013 Boston College Summit on Vocations to the Priesthood), 2013, accessed on March 28, 2016, 13.
http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/mission/pdf/UMMSC_Digital_Assiets/Other%20Web%20Dosc%20UMMSC/College%20Exp%20&%20Priesthood%20Final%20sp.pdf

⁹¹ Data was self-compiled and analyzed based on 78 written profiles of current novices on the jesuitvocations.com home page.

This control point cannot be easily copied or disrupted. The unique Jesuit pedagogy of developing men and women for others, hundreds of years for experience, and reputation as an order of educators define much of the Jesuit brand and organization.⁹²

Segmentation Strategy

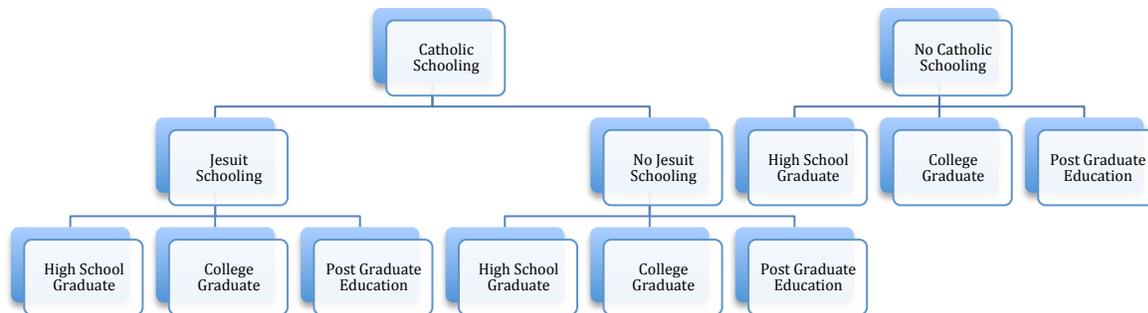
Segmenting the market allows an organization to prioritize which demographic to target based on attributes and preferences. Based off of what we know about the core market, the Jesuit core capabilities, and the strategic control points, we can pinpoint where the Jesuits should compete. First, we can segment the market by demographic information. Next, highlighting important segments can help us combine these pieces of demographic information to characterize a “type” of person. Finally, we will validate the segment based on attributes and attractiveness.

We do not need to focus unnecessary effort on unimportant factors. Geographic location, for example, does not seem to have a real impact on attraction to the religious life, especially because the Jesuits localize promotion efforts in local places throughout the country. As another example, Catholic background is important, but we can basically assume everyone discerning has been a practicing Catholic for at least four years (according to Jesuit advice and best practice for candidates). There are also some factors I have no insight into like the impact of financial stability, with the exception of some student debt information.

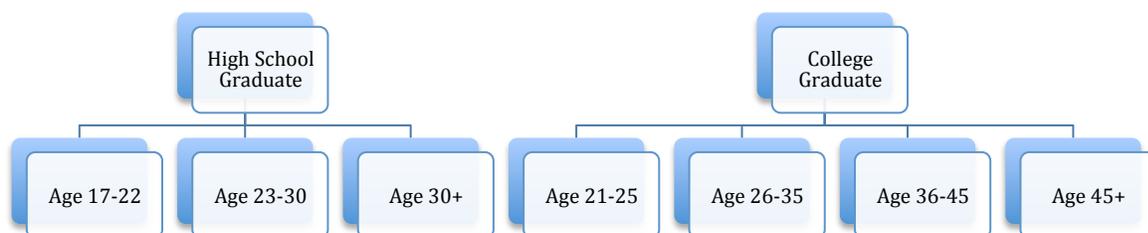
⁹² Jesuit General Congregation 34, “Our Mission and Culture: From Documents of the Thirty-Fourth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, 1995,” in George W. Traub, SJ, ed. *A Jesuit Education Reader*, (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), 11-26.

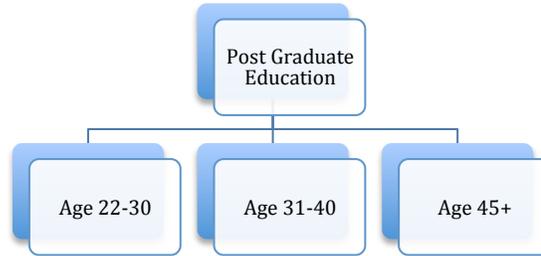
Market Segmentation

The demographic pieces I have been able to gain some insight into and find relevant are Catholic school experience, level of education, age, and experiences (career, volunteering, teaching, etc.).

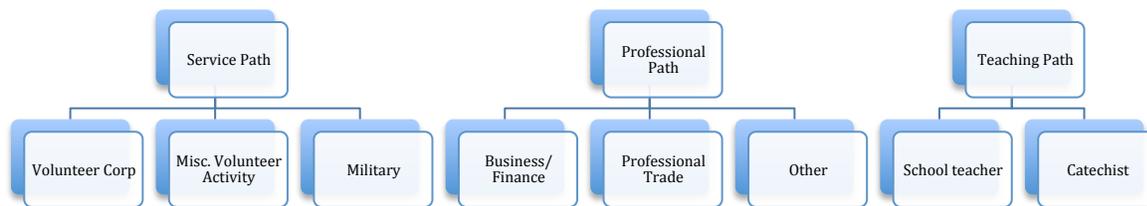


First, let us consider the educational background. In the current Jesuit novitiate, 88% of novices earned bachelor's degrees. Out of the seven that did not, five had attended a Jesuit high school. As much as one third of the novitiate has had some sort of extensive post-graduate education ranging from earning CPA certifications to doctorates or ordinations. Clearly, the Society attracts students, especially those who have had contact with Jesuits or other Catholic priests in educational settings. So, data and the current novitiate information suggest that Jesuit-schooled college graduates a very important, high-priority segment while High school graduates with no Catholic schooling are not important.





To break things down further, I am considering consider highest level of education in respect to age. Each bucket within these segmentation trees represents a different broad category of person. High school graduates ages 17-22, for example, would qualify as “recent high school graduates”. They are not immediately pursuing a college degree, and they probably had Catholic schooling if they are considering religious life. They have typically spent their short amount of time out of high school volunteering in a service capacity or participating in discernment events. On the other end of the spectrum, the 45+ post-graduate education group can be our “scholarly old-timers”. These men are among the oldest to join the novitiate after spending the majority of their life studying and likely spending some time in a “service” profession, like teaching or a position in the military. I have used trends I have seen among current novitiates to select which these groupings and classifications to use. For instance, several of the oldest post-graduate educated novices did serve in the military (six total) or have some form of teaching experience tied to their area of graduate expertise. We can further categorize these groups based on these post-education experiences and professions.



In combination with the other demographic information, these categories can help to complete the picture of our important segment groups. Another feature to consider in terms of characteristics are individuals’ spiritual and community preferences for religious life including types of prayer exercises, living situation in the community, preferred type of ministry, and so on. However, I will not use these to segment because they are not useful in the context of the other categories. For instance, the preference for Ignatian spiritual exercises does not have an obvious correlation with age or education.

Important Segments

Now that we have identified some differentiators, let’s list some important segments we can create using these characteristics. In order to put these segments into greater context, we should keep in mind a few other data points. For one, the average age in the current novice classes is 27.6 (and median age 26).⁹³ Jesuit novices on average are younger than 30, the 2013 average age of entrance into religious life in the United States.⁹⁴ Further, survey studies show that men who attended Catholic secondary school are more than six times as likely to consider a vocation in religious life. Finally, men who do consider this vocation do so, on average, in their

⁹³ Data compiled from profiles on jesuitvocations.com

⁹⁴ NRVC, “Vocations to Religious Life Fact Sheet.”

college years. These findings highlight Catholic education as a key influencer in all religious life discernment and that Jesuits draw in Catholic-schooled men sooner after completing this education than most religious orders. As another addition to context, almost every Jesuit novice notes some history of volunteer or service work. Six of these novices entered the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC), a Jesuit-facilitated network of young, mostly lay volunteers who live together in communities throughout the nation and the world emphasizing service, simple living, and Ignatian spirituality.

Important Segments:

- A. Jesuit High School Teenager – These are the youngest incoming novices, still a little wet behind the ears fresh out of high school, but they have been exposed to Jesuits and Jesuit ideas for a while now. Choosing to postpone college studies, “Christian service” volunteering was likely a part of their high school life or their “gap year” activity of sorts before discernment.
- B. Straight Outta College – Slightly older and more educated than the youngest group, this segment also had some sort of personal contact with the clergy or the religious—usually Jesuits—through their studies. Undoubtedly, they were deeply involved in campus ministry at their university, leading them to a life of discernment
- C. The Young Educator – These young men in their mid twenties went directly from college to the work force as America’s educators. While some focus on catechesis and Catholic teachings, many are middle school or high school teachers both in Catholic and secular schools. Their love for teaching is an important factor for them as they consider discernment and likely to have interacted with Jesuits in teaching capacity or from education at Jesuit institution.

- D. The Young Professional – These men in their late twenties to early thirties earned college degrees and found work in the world of business, non-profits, or through various trades like engineering or law. In their spare time, however, they are active parishioners or leaders in Christian youth groups.
- E. Mid Life Crisis-er – In their forties, these men have had long careers but unlike most of their peers, they are unmarried and without children. Their search for new challenges and adventures has inspired them to consider religious life.
- F. The JVC Guy – These men have spent their five to ten years since college graduation as a full-time volunteer as a part of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, AmeriCorps, a similar group, or just helping people overseas. Service is a key component to their identity as Catholic men of the world.
- G. The Perpetual Student – Above the age of thirty, the perpetual student can't seem to stop learning. They are experts in their field with multiple graduate degrees. Perhaps they have some teaching experience as well, but their pursuit of knowledge as scholars is their defining attribute.
- H. Semper Fi Catholics – These Catholic men have recently completed a tour or career of active duty in the American armed forces as soldiers, health specialists, or even chaplains among other possibilities. They are men for others, drawn to serve a greater purpose than themselves.

The purpose to identifying and characterizing these segments is not to find a way to categorize every type of potential customer. Of course, not every discerning teenager went to a Jesuit school nor did every unmarried man in his forties seeking religious life have a professional or military career. On the contrary, I selected these personas to represent the most important and

relevant segments to the Jesuits based on core competencies and current user (novice) data. Many of the older novices were in fact veterans and the Society the society seemed to make a habit of recruiting men in their thirties with advanced degrees and/or teaching background, for a few examples. So, the characterizations of these selected, important segments bring life to this “type” of customer so that we can make further assumptions about their attributes and attractiveness as a market through “segment validation.”

Segment Validation

“Those who want to sell off spend their time with everyone are generally suffering from a lack of focus.” Now that we have identified and characterized important segments, we must decide where to prioritize and focus marketing efforts. To make this possible, we compare these segments using assigned numerical values in order to assign a sort of consistent, comparative value to each for assessment. Below, I have broken down categories that contribute to the attractiveness of a segment: size, ease of access, independence, familiar with Jesuits, experience/skills (not teaching), teaching experience, and education. Size indicates how large this market segment is. Because I do not have data to compare sizes of these segments as a whole, I evaluated sizes based on the number of current Jesuit novitiates that fit that description.⁹⁵ Ease of access indicates how easily Jesuits could locate and reach out to that segment. Independence measures how free the segment would be from external responsibilities. The most independent segments have no family ties, no dependents, and no financial debts of instabilities. The familiar with Jesuits category indicates whether that segment is likely to have had extensive contact with the Society in the past. This can be attractive because it makes

⁹⁵ Note: Some novices fit into two different segments. Because segments are relatively generalized and not necessarily mutually exclusive, novices who fit two segments were tallied in both.

communicating the marketing message easier and expedited because that segment has been primed and familiarized with the Jesuits by past experiences. Experience/skills includes skills and abilities in business, a certain trade, the arts, leadership, and other areas that would be relevant to contributing to the Jesuit community and to the operations of the Society as a whole. I have included teaching experience as its own category because of the large percentage of current Jesuit novices with teaching backgrounds and the strategic control point of an educational and teaching network for the Jesuits. This correlation clearly implies that the idea of Jesuits as teachers is a critical component to its marketing and a huge draw for customers. Finally, education measures the level of education for each segment ranging from high school to multiple post-graduate pursuits.

I have assigned each segment a score of 1-10 with 1 meaning extremely unattractive in that category and 10 meaning extremely attractive. The letter corresponds to the respective important segment shown above. The scores for each segment in a given category are relative to the other segments in that category. Finally, I have totaled these scores to indicate how the segments stack up to each other in regard to attractiveness as a primary target market.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Putsis, *Compete Faster*, 102 for segment validation process

	Segments							
Attractiveness	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1. Size	4	7	9	6	2	7	2	4
2. Ease of Access	10	7	4	2	2	8	4	4
3. Independence	3	4	6	8	9	6	6	8
4. Familiar with Jesuits	9	8	5	3	3	7	5	3
5. Experience/Skills (not teaching)	3	4	5	7	8	6	5	8
6. Teaching Experience	2	3	8	2	2	2	5	5
7. Education	5	6	6	7	6	6	8	7
Total:	36	39	43	35	32	42	36	39

Segment Selection

Based on our segment validation, “The Young Educator” and the “The JVC Guy” are the most attractive market segments. This is unsurprising because of the strategic control points that correspond to both and the large number of current novices that fit into those categories. To further validate the JVC segment, data shows that 54% of never married men who participate in a volunteer service year have considered a vocation to ordained ministry or religious life

compared to only 13% of the never married Catholic male population.⁹⁷ Although JVC may not be a strategic control point for the Jesuits because there are several similar volunteer service programs, it does serve as a fantastic conduit to reach an interested and key demographic and invite them into consider Jesuit life even more seriously.

The data and segmentation validation suggest that the Jesuits should prioritize Young Educators and JVC Guys, tailoring invitation specifically to those groups. Of course, the Jesuit invitation extends to all men. However, prioritization and an explicit effort to reach these specific target markets will not only increase the efficacy of promotional efforts, it allow these targets to operate as a “beachhead”. Beachhead refers to a smaller market that for the company to penetrate and win first before using that market as a launching point into other markets and segments. Utilizing a beachhead strategy, beginning with young men a few years out of college that teach or volunteer full-time, can help the Jesuits to create a culture of invitations more effectively than ever. Similar to Xavier’s overseas missions to the Indies, the right beachhead market will pave the way for the Jesuits to reach uncharted territories. Casting a wide net often leaves many holes, but through careful selection and intentional targeting the Jesuits can systematically spread their reach to bring invitations to even the most marginalized. Young, educated men with the vigor to dedicate their lives to teaching and service sure sounds like a nice place to start.

The New Mission

The goal of marketing simple: give the customer exactly what they want, even if they do not know they want it yet. The ability to anticipate these needs and satisfy them is no easy task, but it separates the best from the rest. The superior marketers can anticipate and meet needs

⁹⁷ CARA, “Nurturing Vocations to Religious Life and Priesthood: the Impact of a Volunteer Service Year,” Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate Special Report, Spring 2014, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://cara.georgetown.edu/Publications/NurturingVocations.pdf>

because they understand their market better than anybody else. They listen to their market, they learn from their actions, and they empathize with them. At the end of the day, they are the ones willing to do whatever it takes to serve them, to configure every piece of what they do to better satisfy that market. They know how to speak their language, so to speak.

Jesuits are these expert marketers. As early publishers, they became the masters of communicating missionary writings, current events, and even science on the cutting-edge.⁹⁸ Xavier in Japan, De Nobili in India, Ricci in China—they were pioneers of compassion. They were the missionaries eager to serve the un-served, willing to go to great lengths to do so. They empathized with their audience so deeply that they entered their culture. They were experts in the language of empathy, *cura personalis*, constantly learning and listening to better serve their mission.

Nearly five hundred years later, this is still the defining spirit of the Society of Jesus. Their missionary ideals have not been lost, they continue to be exemplars of the same Ignatian principles as the Society's founders. But now, they have been called to a new mission—a 21st century mission to build a ministry of invitations. Church leaders have (quite literally) called upon them all to participate, to be instruments for invitation to the vocation.

We have seen glimpses of progress—attempts to reprioritize and realign through consolidation and collaboration and investigation into the global, digital culture. But, they are playing catch-up. The nature of the Jesuit mission is that of a superior marketer, an anticipator of needs. The discrepancy here is that they have not recognized vocation promotion as a new mission. Although they hear this call, they have not fully embraced it.

To recognize and accept this as a true Jesuit mission would mean for the community of Jesuits to shift their thinking entirely. They would need to embrace the catholic community as a

⁹⁸ Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 193-212.

culture in need, plagued by a shrinking apostolate as the catholic population continues to grow. They must be willing to reprioritize as an organization to address their needs and do whatever it takes to understand them completely and compassionately. They would need to attack it with the same spirit of *cura personalis* and approach it with the same willingness to enculturate as their forefathers.

The Society must now gain a better understanding of their target market and to use that understanding to anticipate and address their needs with invitations. Like the nuns in Ferdinand, IN, they can frame their religious order as business powerhouse and use strategic thinking to accomplish their mission. As leaders in the industry of religious life, they need to align their strategic control points and core competencies with specific needs. They need to segment and characterize the American market—using both data and empathy—to dig into their spiritual and religious needs. Then, they can identify important segments and rearrange priorities to serve the most attractive (that is, the best fit) first with the unique spiritual formation and community they have to offer. Ultimately, this prioritization makes the entire mission stronger, providing a beachhead location from which they can expand. The Jesuits are and always have been the masters of marketing of the religious world—experts in communication and pioneers of compassion. All of the tools are there to go forth and set the world on fire.

The Irony of the “Company”

Since their early history, the Jesuits have been known as “the Company” coming from the interpretation of Society of Jesus name as “Company of Jesus.”⁹⁹ This thesis has examined the Jesuits as a “company”, applying marketing and corporate language to a company that clearly does not follow the rules of most capitalist organizations. Their goals do not align with the target

⁹⁹ O’Malley, *The Jesuits*.

market of their vocation promotion, the cost and value of their product seems elusive at best, and most notably, they have no interest in generating capital through profit. Instead, they pursue a mission for a moral capital, for service, teaching, and solidarity with the poor and marginalized.

Therefore, the practice of analyzing the Company of Jesus as a company, through a business lens, is an especially ironic one. The tenets of *cura personalis* and discernment in vocations that guide the Jesuit ideal will always emphasize careful attention to what is best for an individual. So, the notion of marketing efficiency to beef up numbers for the sake of growth seems contradictory. However, this thesis presents that marketing practices do address important needs for every organization, including the Society. The noble objectives of the Jesuits amount to nothing without a functioning Society, beginning with the men who enter the formation. Clearly, we can find both positives and inefficiencies in both business and mission in regard to religious orders. Still, how one identifies happy medium between these two ideas remains to be seen.

I have identified the success and growth of vocation promotion as a challenge and a new mission for the Jesuits. But, this thesis also presents a challenge for marketing and an idea outside of a capitalist framework. How does marketing as an concept and practice adjust to serve markets that are not purely capitalistic? Further, should marketing inherently orient more toward Jesuit ideals, such as service for a greater good than connecting products to consumers? Perhaps the Jesuits have found a new mission through vocation promotion and that the Jesuit ideal can inform a new mission for marketing, consequently—not only a task to facilitate transaction, but a mission to minister social justice through this.

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