The 10 Commandments for Building and Maintaining Counselor Relations

1. **Be courteous** – When calling high school counselors for the first time, introduce yourself. Let them know you are excited to be working with their students and look forward to meeting them. Give the counselor a specific time and date that will work best with your recruitment schedule, but also be a little flexible. Remember, when meeting for the first time, the counselor may want to have a chat with you before or after you visit with students. Be open to that!

2. **Know what you are walking into** – It is always good to do a little research. Even if you have never worked with a school before, make sure you know what has happened with students entering the admission process at your institution. Also, look into the school. Think about the curriculum: do they offer AP, IB or none at all? How big is the school? Is it public or private? And so on...

3. **Be punctual to your visit** – By this, we mean arrive a few minutes early! Be prepared to not find the counseling office on your first try. Make sure you are there with enough time to start your presentation exactly on the time you scheduled, not arrive to the school at that time.

4. **Ask what is new** – Allow the counselor to direct the conversation as he or she would like. This is always best done by asking what is new or has been happening around the high school. Counselors are proud of their students and want to share news about school and student accomplishments; let them! It will make the counselor’s day to brag about his or her students!

5. **Say thank you** – Make sure you stop by to say thank you after your visit. If the counselor does not sit through your presentation, make sure you find him or her afterwards. Thank the receptionists or whoever is in the office. It is always good to leave on a positive note.

6. **Write a thank you note** – Follow up your visit with a thank you note or email. If you did not leave your contact information behind, include it in your thank you note and make sure there is an open invitation to contact you at any point.

7. **Invite counselors to contact you** – This carries over from your thank you note, but make sure your contact information is readily available to counselors. You will want to start a relationship in which counselors can call with questions about their seniors and any other interested students. This will allow you to gain trust and speak with them on a more personal level.

8. **Don’t hesitate to ask** – The phone works both ways. When you feel confused or uncertain about information regarding a student, call the counselor to ask. If you feel you are reading into something within a student’s application, pick up the phone to ask about it.

9. **Be frank and open** – Throughout the year you are building relationships with counselors. By being open, your counselors will in turn be open with you.

10. **Start all over!** – And then it is time to do it again. With successive visits, you will get to know your schools and counselors and find out how good it is to see a friendly and familiar face while on the road.