



Guide to Segmenting Content by Enrollment Motivation



Marketers have developed a host of strategies to identify the clusters within their prospective customer base and modify communications and approaches accordingly. From multi-layered segmentation strategies to the use of personas, most of these efforts consume a great deal of data answering nuanced questions about shoppers' preferences and behaviors when it comes to everything from watching TV to saving money. At this point, it's unclear how useful such complex analysis is. For some, it may be a feasible and successful component of their marketing strategy. Many institutions do not have the resources for the type of consulting engagement that is typically needed to develop this strategy. Our goal is to provide a baseline approach for the essentials needed to understand prospective student motivations and how communications should be tailored as a result.

A Simpler Approach: Motivations

You can collect and analyze any number of characteristics about your prospective student market—their age, their family status, their shopping behaviors, etc. But what you should care most about are the features that explain a high number of prospects' key questions (i.e., what they need to know before they feel comfortable making the purchase). Motivation is such a feature. By understanding a prospect's drivers for returning to school, you can access the source of many of their key questions. To that end, in this section we will provide you with four archetypal motivational profiles that tend to shop for adult education.

Description	Identifiers	Informational Priorities
<p>Motivational Constituency #1: Career Builders</p>  <p>Typically 25+ years old, seeking additional education for professional mobility or certification. These prospective students will have done their homework. They will reach out to the institution later in their decision-making cycle when they have specific questions (the answers to which they know they cannot find on the website). They will expect prompt responses to questions and will respond promptly themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 25+ years old <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Reaches out with specific, transactional questions <input type="checkbox"/> Responds to emails and phone calls within 24 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty's practical experience in the field <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reputation of the school in the field <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specialized accreditation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Career status of alumni <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tuition reimbursement and preferred provider arrangements with employers
<p>Motivational Constituency #2: Career Transitioners</p>  <p>Typically 30+ years old, returning to school to make a career transition. These prospective students are more likely to have concerns related to the risk and reward of making the purchase (and ultimately the career change).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 30+ years old <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping for professional master's or certificates <input type="checkbox"/> Asks questions about risk and reward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty's practical experience in the field <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reputation of the school in the field <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specialized accreditation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profession entry FAQ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alumni career transition experiences

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Description	Identifiers	Informational Preferences
<p style="text-align: center;">Motivational Constituency #3: Hesitant Graduate Students</p>  <p>Typically younger prospects (22-30 years old), recently departed from undergraduate programs, who are considering a return to education for uncertain professional reasons—they might be avoiding an unwelcoming job market, pursuing an academic passion, or upskilling in a niche area sooner rather than later. Since the intended outcome of returning to school is not as clear for these prospects, they oftentimes have not done a great deal of independent research on their options and, therefore, tend to have questions about most everything. Due to their uncertainty, hesitant graduate students are open to a wider range of educational products—a certificate might be an option, for example, for those who seem too wary to commit to a degree program. For the same reason, they will likely be interested in “freemium” offerings as a “test run.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ 22-30 years old □ Graduated from college within the last 2 years □ Stated interest in a graduate degree program □ Has many questions and undefined needs □ Takes more than 2 days to respond to emails from the institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reputation of school overall ✓ Reputation of school in field of study ✓ Faculty pedigree and experience ✓ Cost ✓ Availability of “freemium” resources ✓ Outcomes
<p style="text-align: center;">Motivational Constituency #4: Enrichment Seekers</p>  <p>Typically older individuals considering a return to education for personal improvement reasons unattached to professional growth; less likely to be looking for “quality” and more likely to make decisions according to loyalty and convenience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ 55+ years old □ “Leisurely browsing” tone during conversations □ Unemployed □ Interested in individual courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Variety of courses to choose from ✓ Course delivery ✓ Schedule ✓ Institutional loyalty (target alumni or family and friends of alumni)

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Crafting Effective Communications with Motivations Intelligence

Motivation profiles in hand, the next step—and one that most marketing teams struggle with—is using the motivation categories to lead effective phone conversations with prospective students. (By effective, we mean those that encourage prospective students to elaborate on their goals so that recruitment advisors can track them to the best-fit program in the unit’s portfolio and so that the marketing and recruitment team nurture the relationship with best-fit marketing content).

Across the subsequent pages, you will find talking points organized to help your recruitment team start conversations around topics relevant to career builders, career transitioners, hesitant graduate students, and enrichment seekers. Below you will find some segment-specific conversation prompts, across the spectrum of standard informational needs as a prospect moves through the funnel. Start at the top and move through the list focusing on areas that seem to have a good fit (based on previous information collected, in-call reaction, etc.).



Conversation Starters for Career Builders

Probe for Information on Loyalty to Industry/Employers

- I noticed you’re interested in our management for engineering program. Would you mind if I asked a little about your **current workplace**?
 - (If unclear) who is your current employer?
 - As you progress in your career, are you interested in remaining in the _____ (e.g., aerospace) industry or do you have ambitions to work in another field?
 - Did you know that some employers offer tuition reimbursement? I am happy to send you an up-to-date dossier on corporate partnerships.
- We occasionally host **corporate alumni breakfasts** at [employer name] and you might find it helpful to speak to other employees who have pursued a program at Example University. Can I send you an invitation for an upcoming corporate breakfast? I’m sure many of the attendees will have gone through similar decision processes. (For instructions on hosting a corporate alumni breakfast, refer to the *Reaching “Search and Shop” Students CRM Implementation Toolkit*, particularly [Tool #8](#), the Corporate Alumni Club Builder, available at <http://tinyurl.com/kn89hj8>.)

Establish early on whether the prospect benefits from employer-university-relationship

Encourage an opportunity to interact with alumni (corporate alumni breakfast is just one example). Group meet-and-greets are palatable even to prospects early in the decision cycle.

Probe for Information on Desired Skills/Expertise

- Are there **specific skills you would like to develop** through this or a similar program? (e.g., skills employers stress or you have observed are important for promotion or progress, skills you would personally like to develop)?
- Follow-up: I’m going to send you a **course syllabus**, which will outline the skills conferred through our program.
- Follow-up: Check out our **testimonials page** to hear instructors, students, alumni, and employers describe our graduates have applied their new-found skills on the job. I’ll send you the link in an email after this call.

Discussing skills will ensure the conversation addresses concrete outcomes

Showcase faculty’s experience in the field (a topic of great importance to this segment)

Advertise Upcoming Events, Emphasizing that They Highlight Concrete Program Attributes

- Have you signed up for a **webinar with one of our faculty members**? Dr. Jones is speaking about his research during a simulcast next week. Would you like me to register you? There will be an opportunity for question and answer with Dr. Jones after the simulcast.
- Our programs offer a number of opportunities for **experiential learning**. Our department chair, Dr. Sydnor, will discuss the internship and research opportunities. Are you interested in attending virtually or in person at one of six locations across the country?

Exploring the career paths of alumni is a topic that is of particular importance to this segment

Offer Connections to Alumni or Students: Are you interested in speaking to one of our alumni about the career opportunities they pursued during and after completing our program?

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Crafting Effective Communications with Motivations Intelligence (Continued)

Unlike career advancers, career transitioners are generally a little unsure of their next career move. As a result, the first set of questions will probe around exactly how much of a change the prospect is looking for and will confirm that the prospect is indeed a “changer” versus an “advancer.”

Conversation Starters for Career Transitions

Probe for Information on Interest in Career Change

- What’s driving your consideration of a **return to school**?
- (If response includes something about career, confirm that the prospective student is seeking out a *new* career.) So, are you currently working in ___ field; **are you looking for a program that will help you advance in your current field** or are you looking for a program that will provide an introduction to a new field?
 - (If prospective student is seeking advancement, refer to the conversation starter on the previous page designed for “career builders.”)
 - (If prospect is seeking an introduction,) our professors have lots of experience working with students in similar positions to you. Not only does the curriculum offer foundational information about careers in _____ (e.g., counseling), it also draws connections and parallels to aspects of previous careers or life experience. Check out our testimonials page to hear instructors, students, alumni, and employers describe our graduates have applied their new-found skills and recalibrated skills on the job.

Probe for Information on Desired Outcomes

- **What attracts you to a career in ___?** (Connect answers to curriculum components or testimonials faculty members, students, or alumni have given and are featured on website.)
- What do you enjoy about your current profession and job? **What would you like to be a part of your future job?** *Note: Help prospect confirm that the field they are considering will provide this to them—compared to other prospects, the change this segment is making is significantly higher risk; it stands to reason that they need additional encouragement and assurance.*

Advertise Upcoming Events, Emphasizing that They Highlight Concrete Program Attributes

- Again, based on **employer testimonials**, you can see from some of the experiences of employers like the Charlotte Mecklenburg School system that principals across the district are enthusiastic about the preparation our students exhibit when beginning their career as a school counselor.
- Are you **interested in attending a course as a guest** so you can get a better sense of the quality of instruction? (Alternative: Are you interested in logging into our student interface and participating in a class discussion?) Dr. Baker welcomes prospective students into his virtual classroom for discussions of ___ (e.g., child psychology). I can email you login information and you will be able to explore the virtual classroom, view the syllabus, and read the very articles students will be discussing in class. You can participate as much as you like in the discussion board. (If applicable, the course requires everyone login between 8pm and 9pm ET on xx/xx/xx.)
- Would you like to speak to a **current student or alumnus** about how they balanced school, family, and work responsibilities? You can also get a sense of how their investment in their education as changes the course of their careers.

Confirm that prospect is searching for a career change

Mention industry certifications, employer partnerships, or awards that the program has earned to demonstrate that the program confers desired skills.

Employer testimonials reinforce that the program is enough training for a career shift.

Invite prospects to an event: their response will help you score their interest; attendees will move farther down the funnel.

Showcase faculty’s experience in the field (a topic of great importance to this segment)

Exploring the career paths of alumni is a topic that is of particular importance to this segment

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Crafting Effective Communications with Motivations Intelligence (Continued)



Hesitant Graduate Student

Probe for Desired Outcomes

- What's bringing you **back to school**?
- What kind of **skills are you interested in developing**? Are these skills technical skills – computer software languages, graphic design skills – or foundational knowledge in a field?
- Tell me a little bit about what your **past academic and professional interests** have been? [Sample interest—environmental economics]. It sounds like you've really cultivated a passion for sustainability and environmental systems. Our program in ____ (e.g., water management) includes many of the principles that attracted you to the environmental field in general. In addition, it's really tailored to industry and society needs around water management, ensuring that you'll be career-ready when you graduate.

Get a concrete understanding for the prospect's desired skills

Connect the prospect's past experience to the program, making the prospect feel qualified.

Probe for Anxieties

- [If student is employed...] About **how much time after work do you have** to dedicate to school work?
- What is your **ideal timeframe** for completing this additional education?
- Do you prefer a **full-time or part-time** program?
- How concerned are you about **paying for continuing education**? Are you willing to work with our options for loans and financial aid for the most comprehensive education possible or would you compromise the comprehension of a program in favor of saving money?

Understanding price- and time-sensitivity will help you identify a best-fit program based on make-or-break factors.

Offer Antidotes for Anxieties

- Follow-up Language around **Selecting a Program**:
 - *For time-sensitive and money-sensitive prospects:* to acquire technical skills only in a field with which you are familiar, consider a certificate like _____. (If applicable, certificates can also be transferred toward credit for a degree should you decide a degree is the best option for your career.)
 - *For prospects seeking an introduction to a topic in addition to technical skills:* Our degrees like _____ are designed for career entrants in that they offer comprehensive foundational knowledge in the field and prepare graduates with technical skills like _____, highly desired by employers.
 - *For undecided students:* What is your vision of career success? Are you interested in a job with a technical focus? Do you thrive better in team-based projects or in autonomous work? How important is it for the bulk of your work to involve interacting over the phone or in-person with clients? With other colleagues?
- Are you interested in participating in a **"freemium" course** / login to the learning interface and participate in a discussion? Would you like to come to campus and participate in a lecture?
- We offer a number of **scholarships and financial aid packages**. I will send you an email after this call outlining the steps for applying for aid. As you know, there is an increasing demand for graduates of XYZ program and a number of our scholarships are funded directly by industry leaders like _____ and _____. In order to qualify for a scholarship, though, you must complete these steps of the application: point A, point B, point C...
- Would you like to **speak to a current student or alumnus** about how they balanced school, family, and work responsibilities

Savvy shoppers will want to "try before they buy" and participation can help you score interest.

Scholarships, even small ones, engender positive feelings about program

This type of conversation be a tipping point in a prospect's decision making.

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Crafting Effective Communications with Motivations Intelligence (Continued)



Enrichment Seekers

Probe for Desired Outcomes

- Tell me a little bit about what your **past academic and professional interests** have been?
- What do you hope to **get out of one of our courses**?
- What kind of **skills** are you interested in developing? Are these skills technical skills – computer software languages, graphic design skills ?

Probe for Anxieties

- **Technology comfort:** Do you participate in blogs or social media in your personal or professional everyday activities? Do you read newspapers online on a computer or tablet?
- Are you looking for new ways to connect with your **community and meet new people**?

Offer Antidotes for Anxieties

- Follow-up Language around:
 - *Flexibility in Intensity:* Our courses are offered on a **schedule that lets students wax and wane their enrollments** depending on the season, offering ultimate flexibility for adults juggling families and other commitments. For example, if you are helping your children move in and out of new apartments or college housing over the summer, you may opt to register for fall classes, which begin in mid September, rather than summer classes which run May to August.
 - *Flexibility in Course Format:* We offer a variety of courses in which you can **enroll one-at-a-time** either for discovery's sake or for exploring your own interest in changing fields. Our academic advisors can help you "stack" those courses into a certificate, helping you flesh out a whole body of coursework that connects themes across a discipline.
 - *Flexibility in Delivery Mode:* If you are comfortable **incorporating technology** and online communication into your education, you may want to explore our online programs for ultimate flexibility. On the other hand, if you like the flexibility of online learning but fear you might miss out on some of the personal interactions inherent in classroom learning, let's discuss hybrid options which include some online courses complemented by in-person meetings XX times per month
- Did you know that we **facilitate study groups** with fellow students?
- Are you interested in participating in a **freemium course** / login to the learning interface and participate in a discussion? Would you like to come to campus and participate in a lecture?
- Would you like to speak to a **current student or alumnus** about how our enrichment courses have invigorated their lives or led to an "encore" career?

Get a concrete understanding of prospect's interest in pursuing education

Does prospect hope for an "encore" career? If so, switch to "transitioner" script

Discover prospect's technology comfort level

Enrichment seekers are pursuing education for enjoyment's sake so assure them course schedules won't take the fun out of learning and allow for choice

Enrichment seekers may be uninformed about the types of learning formats

Appeal to prospects' social needs

Opportunities to experience e-learning technology will put prospects at ease