



Education
Advisory
Board

COE Forum

Identifying and Motivating the "Stealth" Applicant



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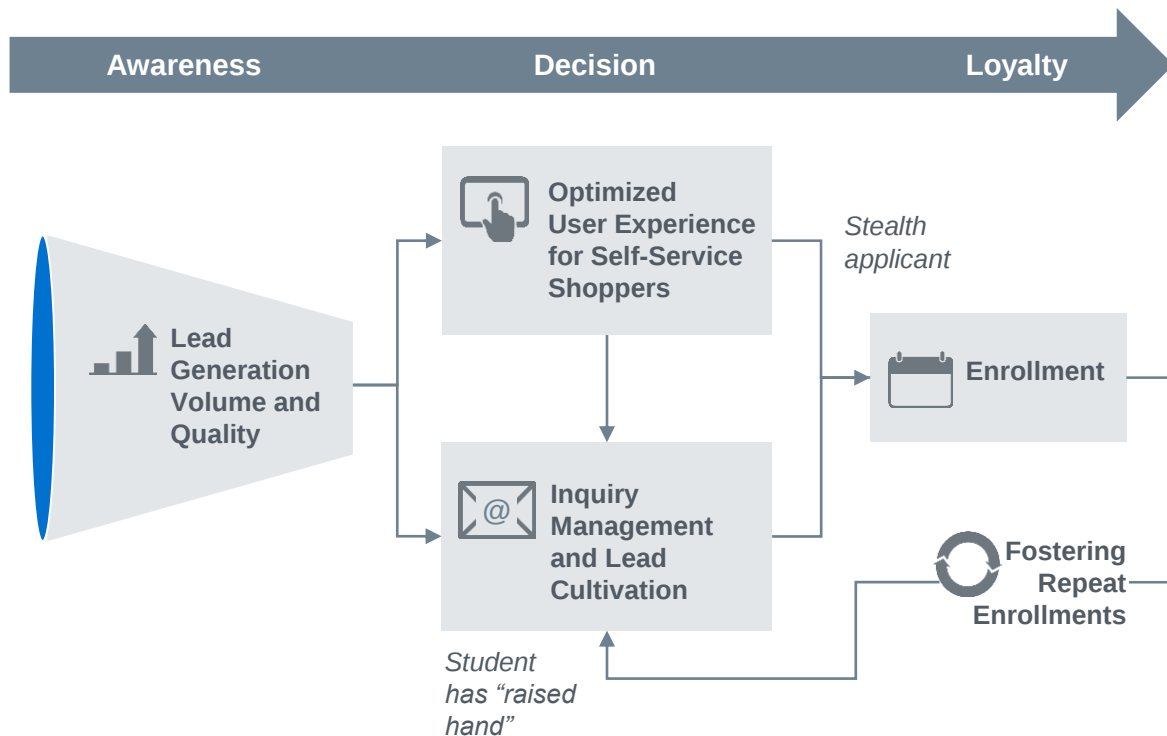
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Systematically Examining COE's Marketing Challenge

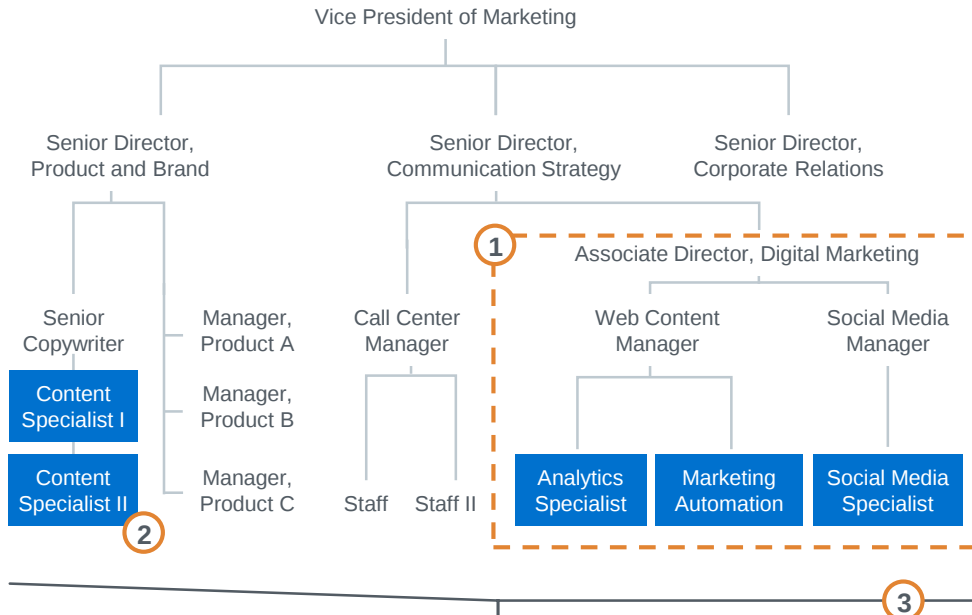




Ideal Organization Out of Reach

Private Sector Marketing Capacity Far Exceeds Typical COE Unit

Typical Private Sector Marketing Organization



1 Do we have the right expertise?

2 Do we have sufficient staff?

3 How can we possibly compete?

Average COE marketing department has only **5.4 FTEs**

Taking a Page from the Private Sector



Attempts to Replicate For-Profit Marketing Tactics Met with Limited Results



(Over)investing in Recruiters

Large public online education unit adds 14 FTE recruiters in an effort to grow enrollments

Despite new positions, enrollment growth rate declines



Phoning in Three Minutes or Less

Small COE unit commits to have staff immediately call all new inquiries

A/B testing reveals that immediate phone contact no more effective in converting leads than email follow-up



Hiring in Private Sector Expertise

Marketing director hired away from for-profit university in hopes of uncovering new practices

New hire's first order of business is improving basic lead management



Corporate Espionage?

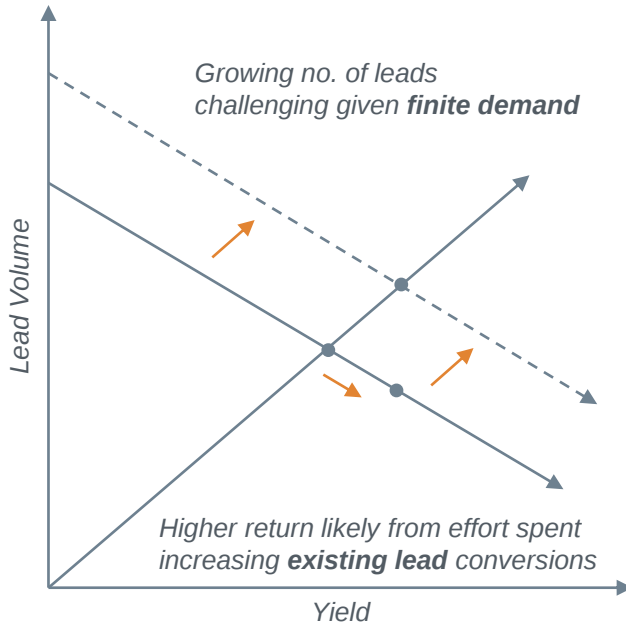
Facing increasing enrollment pressure from local competitors, COE unit sends marketing staff to "spy" on competitor during that unit's morning commute info sessions at local Starbucks

Growth Through Volume Reaching a Limit



5

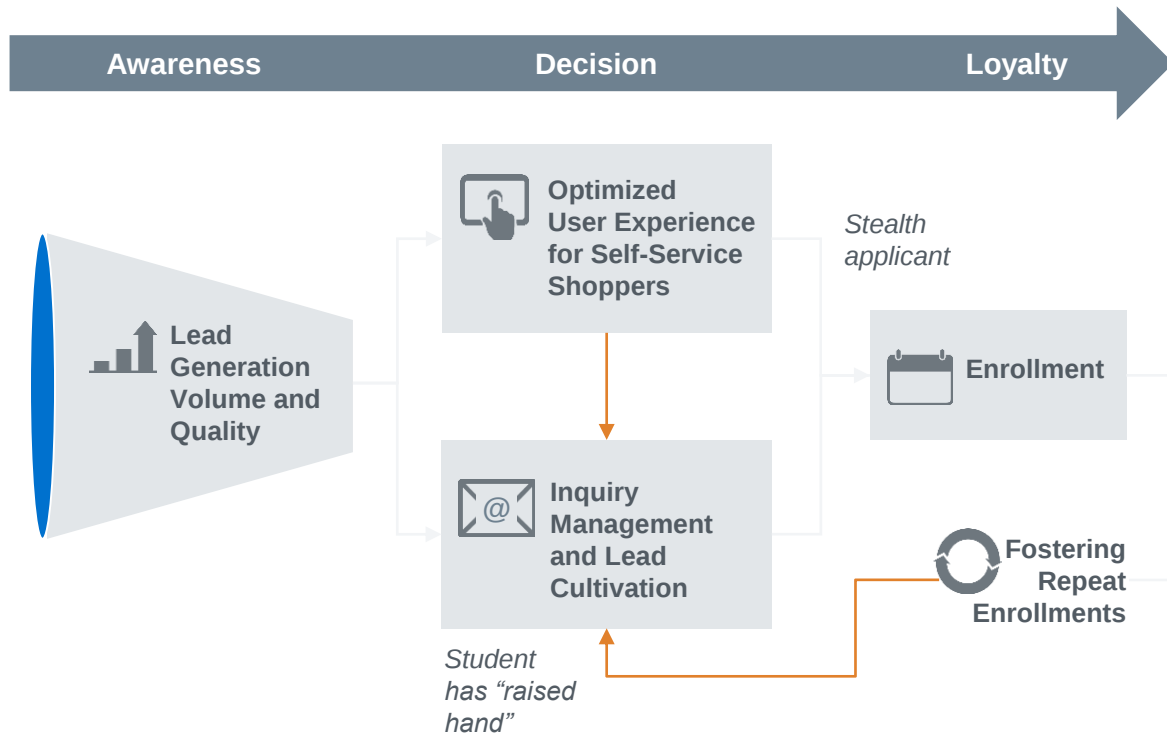
Effort Better Spent on Improving Yield



You can either grow by casting a wider net and generate leads to fill the top of the funnel, or you can convert more of your existing qualified leads. In the past there was enough unmet demand, but that's no longer guaranteed. By focusing on increasing conversions the unit can grow enrollment and likely at a lower cost.

*Chief Marketing Officer,
Private Online University*

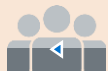
Shifting Our Focus to Lead Management



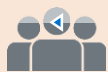


An Increasingly Silent Funnel

Stealth the Norm



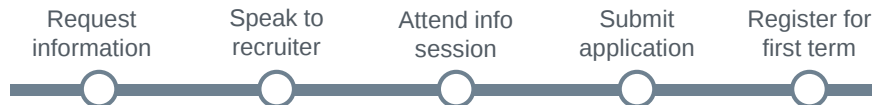
40%
in 2012



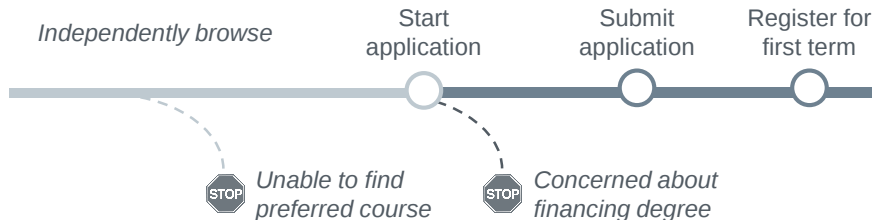
70%
in 2014

*Stealth prospects
as a percentage of
total applicant pool*

Traditional High-Touch Recruiting



Today's Stealth Prospects



Many silent prospects likely never apply



High volume of late inquiries may overwhelm staff



Difficult to forecast enrollments and plan instructional capacity

Recruiting the Silent Funnel

Prompting Inquiry, Increasing Yield, Capturing Re-Enrollments



Increasing Yield

- 1** Prompting Early Inquiry
- 2** Re-Starting Stalled Applications

Capturing Re-Enrollments

- 3** Recommending “Smart” Next Steps
- 4** Cultivating Cross-Campus Partnerships



Prompting Early Inquiry

- Practice #1: Segment-Based Custom Web Pages
- Practice #2: Stealth RFIs
- Practice #3: Proactive Live Chat



A Web and Mobile-First Recruiting Reality

Education Research (and Recruiting) Trends



thinkeducation
with Google

Education Trends through
the Eyes of Your Customer
Tracing the Learner's Digital Journey

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72%

Percent of prospects who visit the institutional website at least two weeks before taking action

25%

Percent of prospects who never look to sources outside the web

80%

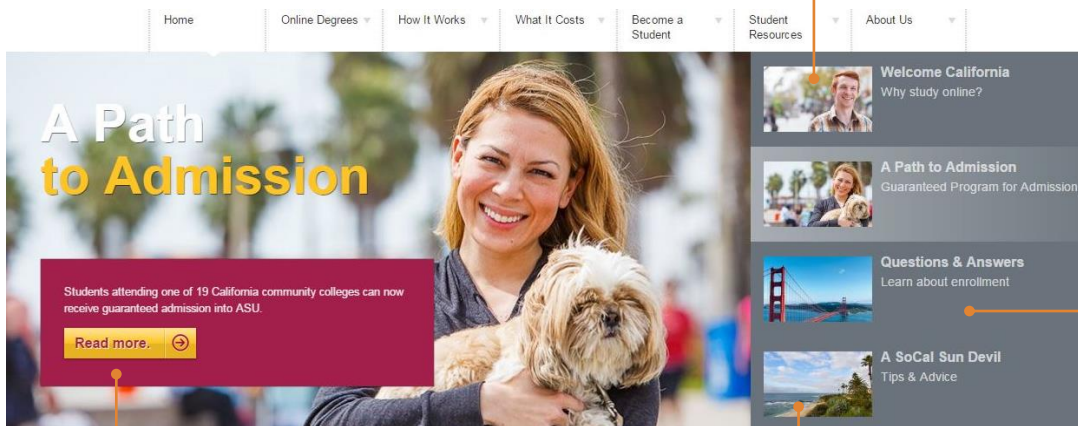
Percent of education search queries that end without conversion

Personal Appeal to the Silent Web Visitor

ASU Online Uses IP Address as Proxy for Personal Preferences

Message welcomes
California site visitor

State-specific images



Prominent placement of pathways for
California community college students

Testimonials and tips from fellow
California Sun Devils



Differentiated Sites Boost Inquiries

Prospects More Likely to Complete RFI When Site Speaks to Them

Segment Customization Options



Out-of-State Prospects

Promote distance learning and regional sites over campus-based programs and events

- Regional locations
- State authorization requirements
- Tuition/fee differences



International Students

IP country code prompts multiple languages; displays differentiated requirements

- Visa and application requirements
- TOEFL scores
- Page translation



Active Duty Military

Location-based geo-targeting identifies site visitors from military bases around the world

- PLA, credit transfer, transcript evaluation
- Tuition benefits and financing options



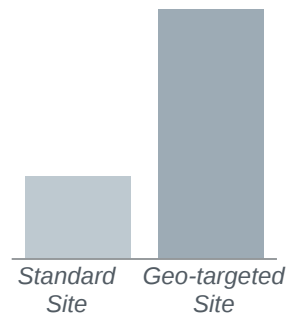
Target Populations

Custom landing page linked to online ads designed to appeal to specific segments

- Testimonials from "people like you"
- Specialized support services

Web-Generated Inquiries

A/B Test Results, ASU Online



**Site prompts
three times as
many inquiries
and double the
page views**

Supporting Independent Search

Website Navigation Challenges Affect Early and Late-Stage Browsers



Browsing Behavior

Information Gathering

- Unsure about programs or courses of interest
- Seeking information to help inform choice
- Unlikely to enroll in the near-term



*Need help **FILTERING** possible choices to home in on best fit option*

Application Preparation

- Synthesizing content from multiple sources
- Seeking information to confirm decision
- Likely to have already begun application



*Need help **CURATING** disparate but relevant information found in search*



Guiding Web Visitors to Find Best Fit Programs

JHU Carey Business School's Program Explorer

Six-Question Diagnostic...

Program Preference

1. *Part-time or full-time*
2. *Time to completion*

Preparedness and Fit

3. *Highest degree obtained*
4. *Years of work experience*
5. *Academic and professional interests*

Additional Information

6. *"Why JHU" open response*

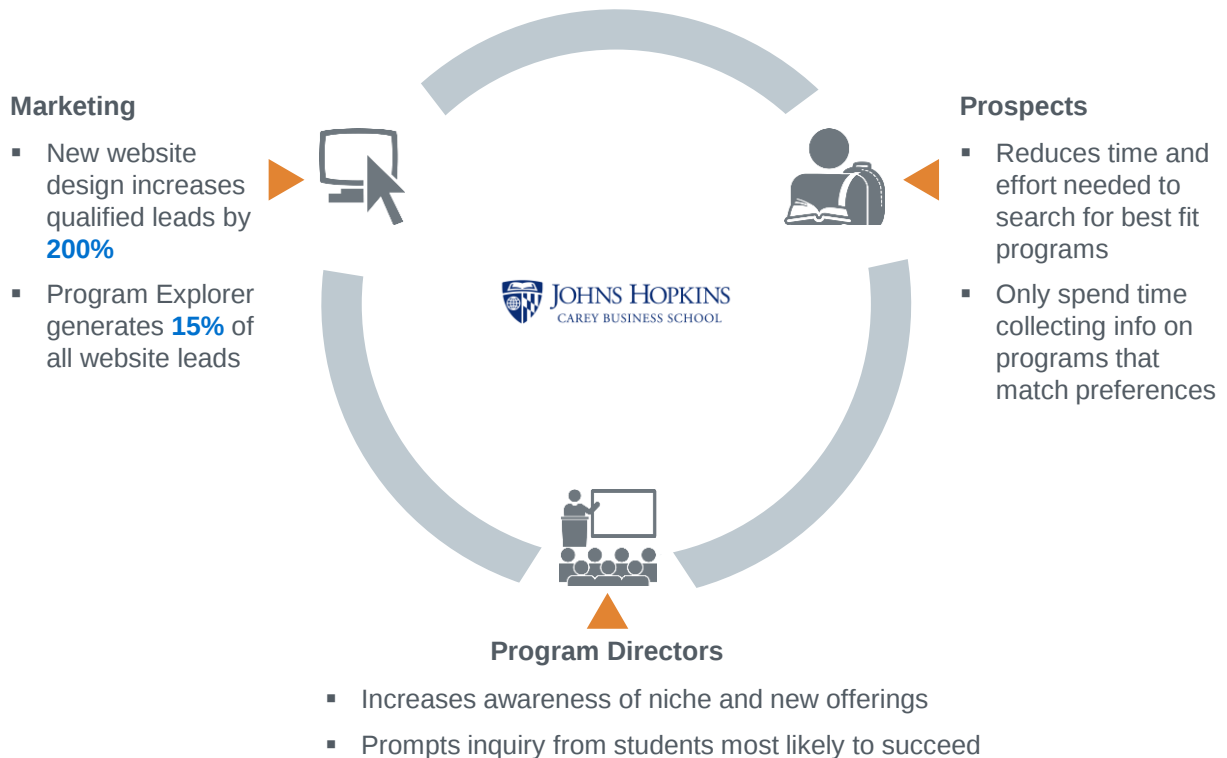
Permits personalized follow-up in response to inquiry

...Populates Matrix of Best Fit Options

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
Credits	36	54	42	64
Experience	None	2+ yrs.	5+ yrs.	2+ yrs.
Length	12 mo.	36 mo.	24 mo.	Self-paced
Campus	DC, Balt.	Baltimore	DC	DC
Focus	Marketing	Economics	Nursing	Mgmt.
Best For...	Biotech interest	Policy profs.	Career advancers	Skills development
Benefits	Global curriculum	Blended format	Specialized focus areas	Capstone project
	RFI	RFI	RFI	RFI

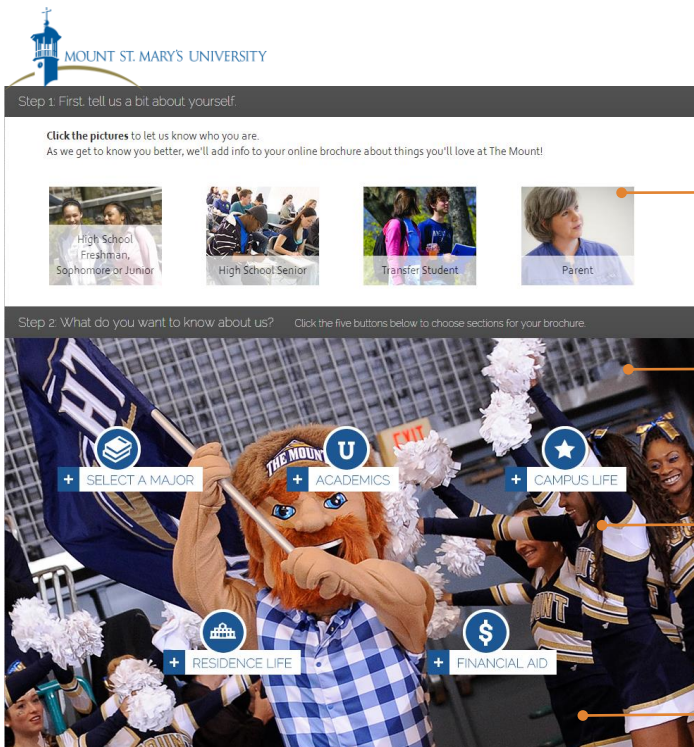
Benefits Beyond an Increase in Inquiries

Marketing, Prospects, and Program Directors Reap Rewards



Design Your Own Marketing Collateral

Mount St. Mary's University Online Brochure Builder



Step 1: First, tell us a bit about yourself:

Click the pictures to let us know who you are.
As we get to know you better, we'll add info to your online brochure about things you'll love at The Mount!

High School Freshman, Sophomore or Junior

High School Senior

Transfer Student

Parent

Step 2: What do you want to know about us? Click the five buttons below to choose sections for your brochure.

+ SELECT A MAJOR

+ ACADEMICS

+ CAMPUS LIFE

+ RESIDENCE LIFE

+ FINANCIAL AID

Student Profile:

Prompt prospects to identify as a degree-completer, working professional, distance learner, or part-time enrollee

Field and Program of Interest:

Select from degrees, certificates, individual courses, and non-credit programming

Support Services and Outcomes:

Choose information on career outcomes, financial aid, and academic support services

Interactive Content Marketing:

Embed videos, blogs, photos, instructor profiles, and interactive content for a multimedia experience

Brochure Follow-Up Form Serves as RFI

Prospect Choice for Brochure Delivery Indication of Lead Warmth

Three Levels of Post-Brochure Follow-Up

Name:

Email:

Optional

Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Make My Brochure

1 Modifiable E-Copy

2 Hard Copy by Mail

3 Recruiter Phone Call

Near-Term Recruiting Benefits

- Admissions officer assigned based on prospect's location and/or program of interest
- Recruiter has insight into prospect's financial, career, and academic support priorities

Long-Term Marketing Wins

- Brochure trends influence ad, direct mail, web and mobile marketing efforts
- Target direct mail expenses to highest value prospects

300+

Number of unique brochures made each year

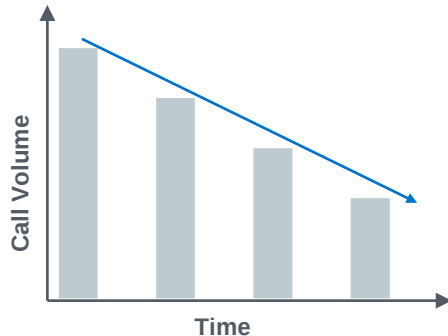
25%

Percent of brochure builders who are new prospects

From Waiting for the Phone to Ring...

Change in Prospect Inquiry Behavior Creates Extra Capacity

Inbound Call Volume Plummeting *Large, Private Research Institution*



*1,000 fewer calls each
year for last three years*

Underutilized Recruiting Staff



Prospects aren't calling like they used to. We have all these staff available to answer the phones, but if calls continue decreasing, we won't be able to justify keeping them there. I've got plenty of other staffing needs – could I replace them with marketing automation?

*Marketing Director for Online Education,
Large Public Research Institution*

... To Inviting Prospects to Chat

Recruiters Cross-Trained to Engage by Phone, Email, and Live Chat



Multi-Channel Learner Reps

- 6 FTEs; 2+ reps on chat at any given time
- Answer email and phone calls when not on chat
- Available during business hours; help button shown when unavailable



Vendor Partner

- Avg. seat license ~\$20/month
- Cost varies according to seat licenses and add-on features

COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



~4 Minutes Per Conversation

- Short, transactional inquiries: *When does registration start?*
- Longer program-focused asks: *Can you tell me about your IT programs?*



30-40 Chats Per Day

- Prospect-driven chat invites visitor to initiate conversation
- **Proactive chat triggered after 2-3 minutes of visitor inactivity**

75% of chats institution-initiated

Prompting Early Inquiry

Key Lessons for Implementation

Tactic Name	EAB Recommendations
Segment-Based Custom Web Pages	Use IP address as a proxy to draw conclusions about the information needs of key demographics; modify page content and craft messages based on presumed prospect identity to increase likelihood of inquiry.
Stealth RFIs: <i>Program Explorer</i> <i>and Brochure Builder</i>	Two distinct moments in the prospect's web research process— initial information gathering and application preparation – necessitate distinct approaches to web content to encourage identification. During the information gathering stage, prospects need help filtering the portfolio to identify best fit options. Prospects in the application preparation stage need help curating disparate but relevant information found during search. Connect the RFI with interactive features and tools that add value during these stages.
Proactive Live Chat	Engage silent web browsers by proactively initiating a conversation through live chat. Silent browsers are more likely than not to discuss concerns and raise questions when recruiters acknowledge their presence on the website and invite them to ask for help. Cross-train existing recruiting staff to respond to inbound phone, email, and live chat inquiries.

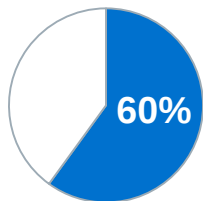


Re-Starting Stalled Applications

- Practice #4: Pending Applicant Outreach
- Practice #5: Progressive Post-Inquiry Follow-Up
- Practice #6: Mid-Application Sample Class
- Practice #7: Pre-Registration Faculty Phone-a-thon

Applications the New RFIs

Majority of Applications Permanently Pending



*Most
started
apps never
submitted*



Application often the first interaction the prospect has had with the institution



Prospects likely starting online applications at multiple institutions



We had so many prospects who were starting applications but weren't finishing. We realized that this was a huge pool of high-quality warm leads that we were ignoring.

*Director of Marketing,
Large COE Unit*

Step 1: Acknowledge Started Applications



Text

- Acknowledge started apps
- Remind of upcoming deadlines



Email

- Link to application components
- Invite to pre-enrollment events



Phone

- Answer complex questions
- Follow up on missing items

Automating Early Recruiting Conversations

Email Follow-Up Campaign Results in More, Better Information

Calls to Action Embedded in Email

COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your interest in the [Master of Biological Sciences](#) (MBS) program at the University of Minnesota.

Ready to get started? Attend an [information session](#) to learn more about the program.

RSVP

Can't attend a session? Tell [us about your goals](#); then we can set up a time to meet.

Talk with an Advisor

- Sent immediately after inquiry
- Tiered calls to action appeal to prospects with varied preferences

Prompts Prospect Self-Qualification

COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Pre-Advising Questionnaire

What is your professional background?

What was your undergraduate degree /GPA?

When do you plan to start?

☐ 3 months ☐ 6 months ☐ 9 months ☐ Not Sure

When are you available to speak with an advisor?

Prequalifies inquiries for fit and readiness

Categorizes prospects based on decision timeframe

Facilitates convenient scheduling

Staged Approach Yields Higher Quality Data



24

Tailored to Program and Student Type

Professional Master's Programs

- Determine prospect qualification for program
- Surfaces opportunities to redirect unqualified prospects to better fit programs

Degree Completion Programs

- Determine transfer credit applicability
- Prompts prospects to upload transcript

Higher Quality Interactions with Serious Prospects



Improved efficiency in receiving student information



Better quality prospect information



Increased number of pre-start advising appointments



Appointments more productive and individualized



CRM Implementation Toolkit

Tool #14: Quick Poll Question Guide

Re-Engaging Abandoned Course Registrations

Private Sector “Abandoned Cart” Follow-Up as Template for Higher Ed



25

Abandoned Shopping Carts by the Numbers

1 in 4 Retailers who reported an increase in shopping cart abandonment last year

75% Percent of online shopping carts that are abandoned



Introduces prospect to contact that can help resolve issue



Offers solution to common registration challenge



Re-engages prospect within 24 hours of abandonment



EAB University

From: Sarah Smith, Enrollment Advisor

To: Prospective Student

Subject: Complete your registration anytime!

Dear Katie,

I see that you have started to register for the online [Project Management Fundamentals Course](#).

Worried about navigating technology to access your coursework? This [short video](#) shows you how easy it really is.

To get started, all you need to do is sign in to our [online registration system](#) and finish the final steps.

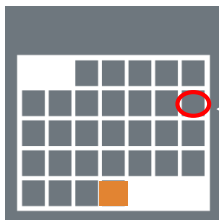
Questions? Contact me via phone or email. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,
Sarah Smith, Enrollment Advisor
Phone | Email Address

Securing Enrollments from Pending Applicants

Sample Class Exposes Undecided Prospects to Program Content

Uncertain Enrollment Projection...



"There are fewer than two weeks until the registration deadline. What if we don't fill the class?"

- Faculty express concern about low enrollments prior to registration deadline
- Prospects from inquiry to recent admits invited to attend free F2F 1 hr "mock" class
- Majority of attendees (and subsequent enrollments) from prospects who were mid-application



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies

...Spurs New Offering for Prospects



Two "mock" classes offered prior to term start introduce prospects to content

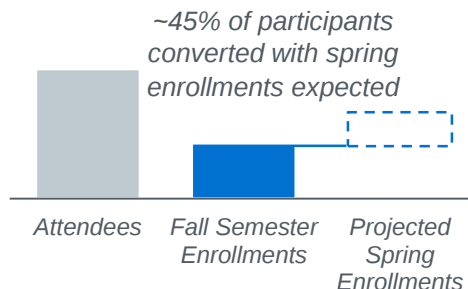


1 hour class taught by program faculty member; regular hourly comp rate



Meet and greet with admissions staff and 2-3 current students

Immediate Impact on Enrollment





Preventing Stealth Applicant Melt

Personal Faculty Welcome Strengthens Connection to Institution



Faculty Phone Campaign: *"How can I help?"*

- Program faculty call admitted students that haven't registered for classes 3-4 weeks prior to deadline
- Each faculty members calls ~15 students for short, unscripted conversation; 50% contact rate
- Focus on answering questions and alleviating student anxiety about quality of online programs

Pilot Phase: Lagging Enrollment Rebound

- Lagging enrollment in Master's of Computer Science program
- Entrepreneurial faculty call admits to encourage registration

15%
Increase in enrollment

Roll-Out: College-Wide Implementation

- Dean-mandated adoption across unit
- Weekly accountability report sent to department chairs to ensure involvement

100%
Participation among faculty

Re-Starting Stalled Applications

Key Lessons for Implementation

Tactic Name	EAB Recommendations
Pending Applicant Outreach	As prospects circumvent the traditional inquiry process and proceed straight to application or course purchase, they are typically not identified or acknowledged until after submission – a missed opportunity to nurture highly qualified leads. Prospects who begin but do not complete either of these transactions should be acknowledged and nurtured through personal attention from staff.
Progressive Post-Inquiry Follow-up	Design embedded calls to action in inquiry follow up messages to progressively build the profile of prospective students. Intelligence gathered through responses can be used for pre-qualification, classification based on decision cycle, and scheduling appointments with admissions or advising counselors.
Mid-Application Sample Class	The highest value moment to offer program-specific sample content is when a prospect is mid-application. Sample classes offer a more targeted format than the typical information session to engage stalled applicants with program content, introduce them to current students and instructors, and alleviate any concerns about their academic preparation or program fit.
Pre-Registration Faculty Phone-a-thon	Given the growing number of stealth applicants, many students are admitted to programs absent any personal contact with COE staff. Invite faculty to reach out to admitted-but-unregistered stealth applicants to strengthen connection to the institution, alleviate any lingering concerns, and reiterate program expectations to best position students for success.

Only the Tip of the Iceberg

Many More Existing Resources to Support COE Members

CRM Implementation



Communication Plan
Templates



Recruiting Strategy
Builder



Lead Scoring Guidelines
and Templates



CRM Implementation
Roadmap

Web Presence Optimization



Content Creation
Handbook



Inbound Marketing
Techniques



Guide to Maximizing
Visitor Time on Site



Calls-to-Action Primer

Mobile Site Optimization



Mobile Design and
Strategy Principles



Content Prioritization
Guide



Mobile Analytics KPIs and
Framework



Vendor Selection
Guidelines



Also Available:

Marketing Automation Toolkit

Thanks again!



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