



EAB

Competing on **Student Outcomes** to Attract Today's Career Changer

Turning Passive Interest into Program Enrollments

COE Forum





EAB

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Turning Passive Interest into Program Enrollments

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Supporting Members in Best Practice Implementation

Resources Available Within Your Membership

This publication is only the beginning of our work to assist members in adult learner recruitment. Recognizing that ideas seldom speak for themselves, our ambition is to work actively with members of the COE Forum to decide which practices are most relevant for your organization, to accelerate consensus among key constituencies, and to save implementation time.

We offer a variety of services to assist you with your mission. For additional information about any of the services detailed below, please contact your organization's relationship manager or visit our website at eab.com. To order additional copies of this publication, please search for it by title on eab.com.

Implementation Road Maps and Tools

Throughout the publication, this symbol will alert you to any corresponding tools and templates available in the Toolkit at the back of this book. These tools are also available on our website at eab.com.

Recorded and Private-Label Webconference Sessions

Our website includes recordings of three webconferences walking through the practices highlighted in this publication.

Forum experts are also available to conduct private webconferences with your team.

Unlimited Expert Troubleshooting

Members may contact the consultants who worked on any report to discuss the research, troubleshoot obstacles to implementation, or run deep on unique issues. Our staff conducts hundreds of telephone consultations every year.

Facilitated Onsite Presentations

Our experts regularly visit campuses to lead half-day to day-long sessions focused on highlighting key insights for senior leaders or helping internal project teams select the most relevant practices and determine next steps.



To access the full range of services available to you, please visit our website at eab.com/coe.

Systemically Examining COE's Marketing Challenge

Overview of COE Forum's Marketing and Recruiting Best Practice Research

Recognizing that there is no one, linear path to enrollment for COE students, the illustrative marketing funnel on the opposite page, divided into four sections—pre-awareness, awareness, decision, and loyalty—organizes the COE Forum's marketing and recruiting best practice resources by critical moments in the adult student lifecycle. The resources listed under each segment refer to studies, study chapters, or implementation toolkits available now.

1 Pre-awareness: Triggering Interest and Prompting Search

The research and insights contained in the following pages of "Competing on Student Outcomes to Attract Today's Career Changer" speak to the pre-awareness phase of the adult student lifecycle. Changes in consumer behavior, including increased skepticism of advertising and decreased attention, have fundamentally challenged the higher education marketing paradigm. The breakthrough practices profiled help members to capture the attention of and trigger interest among undecided career changers—a largely untapped population of high-affinity prospective COE students.

2 Awareness: Making the Case for Enrollment

All COE units must build and cultivate a differentiated identity in an increasingly crowded market to reach prospective students. Our best practices highlight how institutions can amplify their marketing messages by leveraging social media platforms, rewarding word-of-mouth referrals, and developing partnerships with employers and other organizations.

3 Decision: Supporting Both Traditional Inquiries and Self-Service Shoppers

A growing number of prospects today are self-service shoppers or stealth applicants, comfortable independently searching for and comparing institutions and programs. The COE Forum offers robust research and implementation tools to help members optimize prospective students' self-service experience through enhanced website and mobile presence and using try-before-you-buy content marketing to engage and encourage prospective students to enroll.

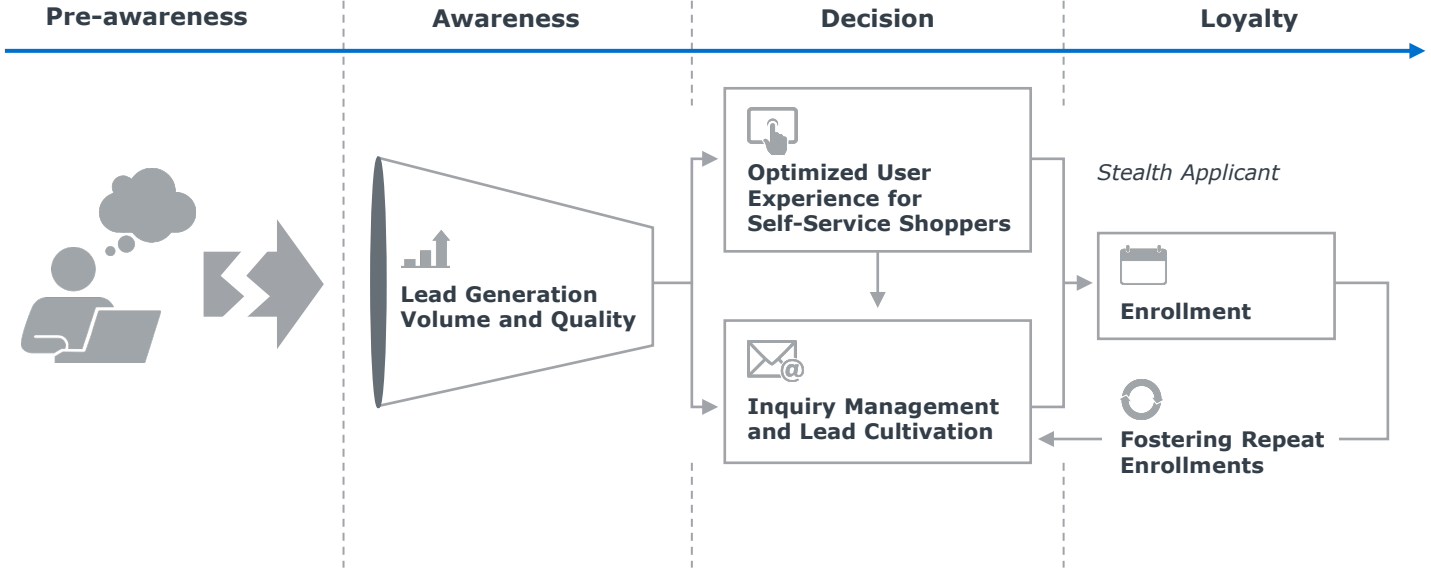
Once a student inquires about a given course or program, many COE units struggle to discipline lead nurturing and cultivation processes to increase yield. Our research offers resources to implement and manage CRM and marketing automation software, as well as nudge students to restart stalled applications.

4 Loyalty: Positioning COE as the Lifelong Learning Partner

The COE Forum has identified best practices to position the COE unit as a lifelong learning partner. These best practices promote loyalty and encourage re-enrollment, helping members convert individual course takers into multiple course takers, then into certificate seekers, and finally into degree completers with stackable and flexible programs aligned to evolving career needs.

5 Process and Structure: Integrating Marketing Across the Program Lifecycle

Many institutions still struggle to formally involve marketing during program development and launch, and lack formal mechanisms to help unit and program leadership calibrate marketing investment in existing programs to take advantage of latent opportunities for growth. Additional research and resources help inform the fundamental organizational processes and structures necessary to ensure implementation of best-in-class marketing practices across the funnel.



- 1 Prompting Search**
- Capture Attention of Undecided Career Changers (2017)
 - Deploy Outcomes Marketing to Trigger Prospect Interest (2017)
 - Enable Prospects' Independent Career and Program Search (2017)
 - Harness Student Value Stories and Social Proof (2017)

Available in this Publication

- 2 Lead Generation**
- Disciplining Social Media Strategy (2012)
 - International Social Media Recruitment (2012)
 - Rewarding Word-of-Mouth Referrals (2013)
 - Innovations in Try-Before-You-Buy (2014)
 - Prompting Early Inquiry (2015)

- 3 Self-Service Shoppers**
- Web Presence Optimization Toolkit (2013)
 - Adding Value in the Search Process (2014)
 - Mobile Optimization Toolkit (2014)
- Lead Cultivation**
- CRM and MAS Implementation Toolkit (2013)
 - Restarting Stalled Applications (2015)

- 4 Repeat Enrollments**
- Fostering Repeat Purchase Behavior (2013)
 - Making "Smart" Recommendations (2015)

- 5 Organizational Models**
- Integrating Marketing in Program Development (2016)

- Diagnosing Enrollment Barriers**
- Gleaning Actionable Insights from Faculty (2016)
 - Elevating Faculty Understanding of Program Performance (2016)
 - Gathering Real-Time Market Insight (2016)

- Budgeting and Planning**
- Allocating Resources Through Testing (2016)
 - Surfacing Programs for Strategic Investment (2016)

Immediately Available to Members

Executive Summary

Competing on Student Outcomes to Attract Today's Career Changer

Marketing Playbook Ineffective in Current Consumer Environment

Program-focused marketing messages are no longer sufficient to attract prospective students to professional, adult, and online education programs. Consumers today are highly skeptical of marketing messages, filtering out solicitations and content not immediately relevant or engaging. This calls into question the primary lead generation strategy deployed by most COE units and requires a new approach to attract and maintain prospect attention.

Changes to consumer behavior require a new marketing paradigm in the attention economy:

- 1. Demand for consumer attention is rapidly outpacing its supply.** Marketing costs across industries have risen at dramatic rates in the last few years, while consumer avoidance of marketing—evidenced by the steep increase in ad blocking technology adoption—has increased commensurately.
- 2. American adults are constantly digitally accessible, but highly distracted.** Marketers have more opportunities to access digitally-connected consumers now than ever before, but those same consumers are much more distracted and less likely to engage.
- 3. Consumer skepticism of marketing and advertising has reached an all-time high.** There is a growing disconnect between the advertising strategies that colleges and universities believe to be most effective—and in which they invest most heavily—and the types of messages that prospective students find most compelling. Marketers invest the vast majority of their budget in advertising, while consumers are more likely to trust recommendations and referrals from personal networks and third-party sources to validate their purchase decisions.
- 4. Higher education not immune from the acceleration of "ROI" shopping behavior.** Public concern over student debt and uncertain higher education outcomes compounds skepticism among prospective students, often delaying decisions to pursue graduate or continued education.

Reaching the Largely Untapped Market of Passive Career Seekers

Today's career changer—a professional dissatisfied in her current position, unsure what role to pursue next, and unconvinced that she requires further education to support such a move—represents a natural fit for COE's market-driven program portfolio. As many as three-quarters of professionals in their 30s seek a career change; however, given concerns about debt and the inherent risk of changing paths, most require tangible evidence of a program's value before deciding to inquire or enroll. If COE marketers can provide such evidence, then today's passive career seeker represents the field's next major growth market.

The career changer population is most likely to respond to program-agnostic campaigns that highlight tangible professional benefits and anticipated career outcomes. The career seeker professional is particularly unlikely to respond to direct, product-first marketing solicitations without first understanding the demonstrable outcomes and ROI she can expect from a given program. To capture the attention of prospects who may not yet be actively considering further education, COE marketers must use their advertisements to elevate the tangible benefits of program enrollment and support prospects in gathering information about possible career opportunities.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Competing on Student Outcomes to Attract Today's Career Changer

COE leaders can attract the attention of career changers with outcomes-focused marketing messages that communicate labor market demand, support a career-focused educational search, and offer authentic feedback from program graduates as social proof of a program's value. The marketing playbook must evolve to compel prospective career changers to actively consider alternative fields and career paths, educate prospects on available programs and their link to career outcomes, and provide relatable student value stories and testimonials to validate the decision to apply and enroll.

Highlight relevant local and regional career opportunities to capture scarce prospective student attention. Though many potential career changers are discontented in their current roles and hoping to make a substantive change, many are unsure which career or professional field will best suit their needs and goals, and few are actively considering further education to support a career change.

Support independent career exploration and align program portfolio to professional opportunities to engage interested prospects. Once a prospective career changer is aware of an attractive field, she will require additional information about the skills, education, or experience required to enter it. At this point in the decision cycle, while the prospective student is engaged with content marketing collateral but not yet convinced of the need or value of returning to school, marketing must make the case for how the skills conferred in the program connect to and meet demonstrated labor demand.

Highlight authentic student value stories and other forms of social proof to accelerate prospective student decision making towards enrollment. Once a prospective student has decided that further education can support a career change and has begun to identify and prioritize right-fit programs, she will seek validation and proof of a program's value and outcomes. Marketing can leverage social proof, student stories, and other creative expressions of outcomes data to provide evidence of program value.



The Challenge

Competing on Student Outcomes

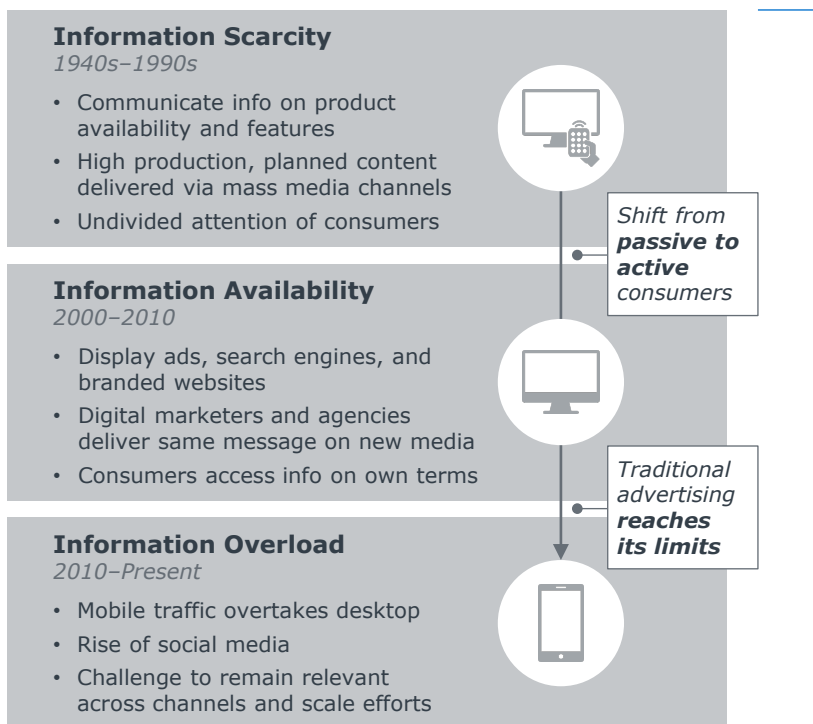
INTRODUCTION

Marketing's Tipping Point

Lessons from the Past 75 Years of Advertising

Continuing, online, adult, and professional education marketing has reached a tipping point—it has become too costly and resource intensive to continue to fill the top of the funnel using strategies relied upon in the past. To understand how today's marketers have reached this point, it is helpful to study a brief history of the relationship between advertisers and consumers over the past 75 years, illustrated in the graphic below. The birth of product marketing in the 1940s came in an age of information scarcity, when American consumers relied on a finite number of mass media channels, including television and newspapers, to access information. Advertisers could easily reach this captive audience with branded messages and solicitations, provided they had the budget.

Tech and Consumer Behaviors Upend Traditional Methods



Three Key Themes Emerge

1 Demand Outpacing Supply of Consumer Attention

Cost of buying attention via paid media is unscalable and unsustainable

2 Accessible but Distracted

Technological advances enable consumers to spend more time online, but they are increasingly distracted

3 Rise of the Skeptical Consumer

Savvy consumers seek validation of investment and value from organizations and third-party sources

With the advent of the internet, however, the dynamics between brands and consumers fundamentally changed. Individuals no longer had to wait for advertisements to inform them of newly available products and services, but could instead search for and find information themselves. Advertisers responded by developing the capabilities to place their existing messages on new media, essentially “bolting on” traditional marketing strategies to new digital channels.

Today, after almost two decades of digital content creation and the rise of social media and mobile browsing, the traditional marketing and advertising playbook has reached its limits. Three key themes emerged from this year's COE Forum research on consumer search and purchase behavior in the age of information overload that represent the primary challenges today's professional, online, and adult education marketers must overcome to reach and engage a prospective student audience. First, demand for consumer attention has vastly outpaced its supply. Second, consumers are more accessible but also more distracted than ever. Third, consumers today are more skeptical of marketing messages than ever before.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

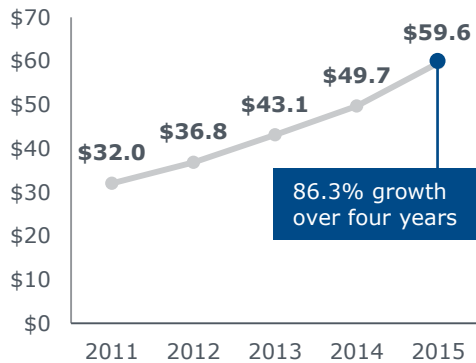
Shouting to Be Heard

Trickle-Down Effect Unrealistic in Current Landscape

The first challenge faced by today’s adult, online, and professional education marketer is that while demand for consumer attention has never been greater, the supply of that attention has never been scarcer. Marketers must spend increasing amounts of time and money to convince consumers to pay attention to their messages, and digital advertising spending across all U.S. industries grew nearly 90% between 2011 and 2015 as a result. At the same time, consumer willingness to view advertisements has decreased, evidenced by the rise in ad blocking technology with an estimated third of the U.S. internet-using population employing some form of ad blocker in 2017.

Digital Ad Spending Skyrockets

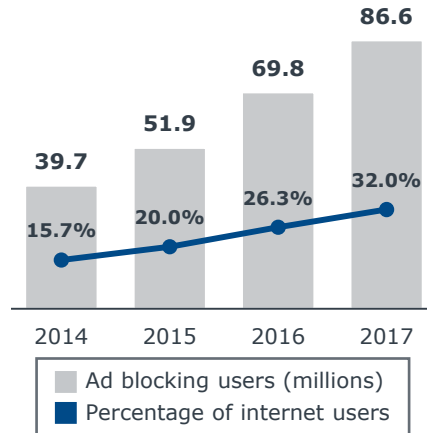
Dollars Spent on Digital Ads (in Billions) 2011-2015



362 Digital ad exposures per user per day in the United States

But We’re Less Receptive Than Ever

Ad Blocking Growth in the U.S. 2014-2017



0.06% Average click-through-rate of display ads

The parallel growth of digital ad spending with ad blocking adoption domestically has created a fraught environment for marketers, who must spend ever-greater proportions of their budgets to reach an ever-dwindling sliver of their target population. By some estimates, consumers are exposed to over 350 digital advertisements every day, but such ads garner low click-through-rates, so even when consumers do encounter an ad they are highly unlikely to engage with it. It has become unsustainable for all but the most well-resourced marketing teams to continue to acquire new customers using the same lead generation strategies they have employed in the past.

Source: Lu K, J Holcomb, "Fact Sheet: Digital News Revenue," Pew Research Center, June 15, 2016, <http://www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/digital-news-revenue-fact-sheet>; "Adults Spend 10 Hours per Day with the Media, but Note Only 150 Ads," Media Dynamics Incorporated, September 2014, <http://www.mediadynamicsinc.com/uploads/files/PR092214-Note-only-150-Ads-2mk.pdf>; "26.3% of Internet Users Will Use Ad Blockers This Year," eMarketer, <https://www.emarketer.com/corporate/coverage/be-prepared-ad-blocking>; Rich Media Gallery, "Display Benchmarks," Google, <http://www.richmediagallery.com/tools/benchmarks>, EAB interviews and analysis.

Connected but Competing for Mindshare

Prospect Attention Scarcer Than Ever

The second challenge today’s marketers face is that, while more opportunities to access digitally connected consumers exist now than ever before, those same consumers are much more distracted and less likely to engage. Consumers now access information and engage with physical and digital content on more channels than ever, providing numerous opportunities for marketers to deploy branded messages and generate new leads. However, this constant connectivity has come at a cost, resulting in a consumer base that is increasingly distracted and difficult to engage meaningfully.

The Constantly Connected Consumer...

Increase in the Percentage of U.S. Adults Who Are Always Addressable



38%
in 2012



50%
in 2014

...Stresses Our Ability to Pay Attention

61% Of people feel they have to keep track of information from **too many sources**

45% Say that data overload has affected their **sleep or personal relationships**

44% Solve the problem by **ignoring communications**

“Digital lifestyles deplete the ability to remain focused on a single task... Multi-screening trains consumers to be less effective at filtering out distractions—they are increasingly hungry for something new. **This means more opportunity to hijack attention but also that brands need to work harder to maintain it.**”

*Alyson Gausby
Consumer Insights Lead, Microsoft*

For the past five years Forrester Research has tracked the proportion of the U.S. adult population that it deems to be “always addressable”: individuals who own and use at least three web-connected devices, and who access the internet multiple times per day from multiple locations. While the proportion of U.S. adults who are always addressable rose to 50% in 2014, individuals increasingly feel overwhelmed by the number of information sources they feel obligated to track, and many simply ignore incoming communications as a means to cope with the added stress of an increasingly connected digital lifestyle. Advertising’s goal is no longer to convey relevant information about a new product or service, but simply to capture and sustain a consumer’s attention, hoping to make a lasting impression.

Source: Parrish M, et al., “Create Marketing Your Customers Can Use,” Forrester, <https://www.forrester.com/report/Create+Marketing+Your+Customers+Can+Use/-/E-RES113043>; Consumer Insights, Microsoft Canada, “Attention Spans,” Spring 2015, <https://advertising.microsoft.com/en/WWDocs/User/display/cl/researchreport/31966/en/microsoft-attention-spans-research-report.pdf>; EAB interviews and analysis.

“Prove It” Says the American Consumer

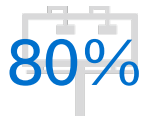
Disconnect Between Marketing and Consumers

The final challenge that all marketers face is a growing disconnect between the advertising strategies that colleges and universities believe to be most effective—and in which they invest most heavily—and the types of messages that prospective students find most compelling when deciding whether or not to pursue a given program. Marketers invest the vast majority of their budgets in advertising, while consumers increasingly turn to recommendations and referrals, third-party sources, and reviews to validate their purchases.

What Marketers Believe Is Effective...



Percentage of marketers who believe traditional advertising is most influential to customer decision making



Average proportion of marketing budget allocated to advertising

Highest Quality Leads Most Skeptical

“Your **most desirable customers don’t trust shallow branded messages**, but are exposed to more of them than other customers because of their perpetual connection. This gives marketers more opportunities than ever before to engage their customers in meaningful ways—or to screw it up.”

*Melissa Parish,
Forrester Research*

...Out of Sync with Ideal COE Target Audience

Distrust in Advertising by Education Level



65%

Post-Graduates



44%

High School Grads

Consumers Increasingly Seek External Validation

Consumers Most Trusted Sources

- 1 Friends and Family
- 2 Online Reviews
- 3 Third-Party Experts

Simply put, consumers seek others’ input before making a purchase, and marketers investing heavily in advertising risk wasting their budgets on messages that do not reach their intended audience. Further, research indicates that individuals possessing at least a bachelor’s degree—COE’s highest quality and often most skeptical leads—distrust advertising more than high school graduates, compounding the challenges posed by an increasingly crowded and expensive marketing environment, ad blocking prevalence, and distracted consumers. While most institutions understand word-of-mouth and their students’ advocacy to be critical to enrollment efforts, few have invested deliberately in a successful prospect-facing marketing strategy using these messages.

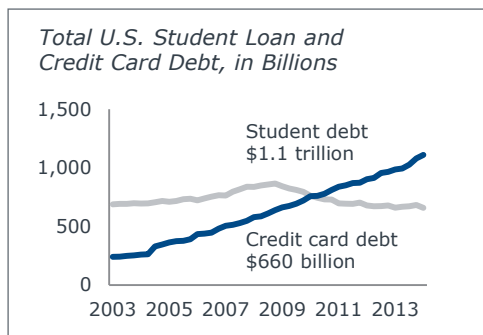
Source: “New Study: Traditional Marketing Fails to Gain Consumer Trust,” Experticity, December 2015, <https://www.experticity.com/blog/2015/09/29/new-study-traditional-marketing-fails-to-gain-consumer-trust/>; Edelman D, “Branding in the Digital Age: You’re Spending Your Money in All the Wrong Places,” *Harvard Business Review*, 2010, <https://hbr.org/2010/12/branding-in-the-digital-age-youre-spending-your-money-in-all-the-wrong-places>; Parrish M, et al., “Create Marketing Your Customers Can Use,” Forrester, <https://www.forrester.com/report/Create+Marketing+Your+Customers+Can+Use/-/E-RES113043>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Increasing Burden of Proof on Higher Ed

Grad Education as Career Accelerator No Longer a Foregone Conclusion

While skeptical individual consumers seek third-party sources to validate purchasing decisions, society writ large increasingly rejects the notion that postsecondary education is innately valuable or worthwhile as total student debt continues to grow well above one trillion dollars. This crisis places the onus on institutions of higher education to articulate and quantify the value of the programs they are advertising, especially as substantial numbers of debt-burdened adults feel that their student loan debt has limited their ability to attend graduate school or even to further their careers.

Today's Trillion Dollar Problem



Public Scrutiny of Undergraduate Borrowing Likely to Turn to Graduate Education

Data Shows Disproportionate Borrowing by Graduate Students

40% of all student borrowing comes from graduate students, who make up 15% of student population

15% of graduate students owing \$100K+

Delaying Post-College Decisions

Student Debt Delaying Graduate School and Career-Related Decisions

43% Of survey respondents who indicated that student loan debt has limited their ability to attend graduate school

47% Agree or strongly agree that student loan debt is hampering their ability to further their career



Current HEA Reauthorization Proposals to Limit Master's and Part-Time Borrowing

- Cap annual loan limits for graduate students from \$80K to \$30K (with a total borrowing cap of \$150K)
- Cap loans for part-time students at estimated cost of attendance, restricting borrowing to tuition and fees

Pending proposals for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act seeking to limit graduate student borrowing reflect a public discourse that no longer views graduate study as intrinsically valuable, or as an obvious next step for professionals seeking to advance in their careers. These proposals, in conjunction with the attempted College Scorecard, likewise acknowledge that individuals increasingly seek proof of a degree's value, especially expensive master's programs or alternative credentials such as certificates. Marketers must equip themselves to prove to their prospective students that the programs they advertise are worth the investment, or risk losing the market's confidence in the value of their product.

Source: "Public University Costs Soar," March 16, 2013; Federal Reserve Bank of New York; "Highly Educated, Unemployed, and Tumbling Down the Ladder," NBC News, October 12, 2014; "Three A's Driving the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act," WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies, August 2015; "Life Delayed: The Impact of Student Debt on the Daily Lives of Young Americans," American Student Assistance, 2015, http://www.asa.org/site/assets/files/4743/life_delayed_whitepaper_2015.pdf; EAB interviews and analysis.

Accelerating ROI Shopping

Untapped Audience of Disengaged, but Undecided Career Changers

Acute public scrutiny on the value of graduate and further education combined with an increasingly skeptical consumer base have catalyzed prospective student search behavior focused on demonstrable ROI. This propensity to search for educational options based less on an already-determined program of interest and more on quantifiable outcome is most noticeable among a largely untapped audience of prospective COE students: early- to mid-career professionals who are dissatisfied in their current role and seeking to make a change either in their position or career. These individuals represent the next growth opportunity for COE marketers and program developers.

Most Americans Still in Search of Dream Job

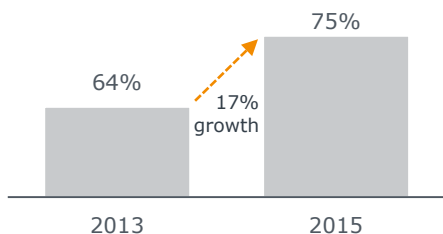
Indeed.com Study of Job Seeking Behavior in the U.S.

81% of job seekers search in an occupation category other than their own

56% of job seekers don't search in their own occupation category at all

Rapid Growth of Americans in their 30s Hoping to Change Careers

University of Phoenix Study of Adult Working Professionals



Career Changers Seek Outcomes to Alleviate Common Anxieties

"Which career fields are growing the fastest in my region?"

"How can I increase my earning potential short term?"



"Can I apply my skills in a career or position with better pay and work/life balance?"

"How have other students used this program to achieve their goals?"

"What skills or experience do I require to get and stay ahead in my field?"

While traditional marketing appeals in COE use career benefit as part of the value proposition, such messages typically focus on career advancement within a particular field. Many of today's professionals, however, are not interested in continuing along their current career trajectory at all. In fact, Indeed.com, a prominent job search site, finds that the vast majority of job seekers conduct at least one search for positions outside of their own occupation category, and most do not search within their own occupation category at all. Despite dissatisfaction in their current roles, these professionals hesitate to change careers given the practical and existential risks involved. To capture the attention of this growing professional student market, COE marketers must craft messages that alleviate this population's specific anxieties, and articulate a clear path towards career satisfaction and success.

Source: Indeed Hiring Lab, "What Job Seekers Want: Occupation Satisfaction and Desirability Report," Indeed.com, March 2014; "U.S. Working Adult Career Survey," University of Phoenix School of Business, March 2015; EAB interviews and analysis.

Undifferentiated Program-First Messages

Simply Expanding Brand Awareness Not Enough

While professionals dissatisfied in their current roles and seeking new career opportunities represent an ideal growth market for the COE program portfolio, current higher education marketing strategies and messages do not fully capture this audience or compel them to enroll in available programs. That is because the traditional COE marketing playbook focuses on promoting specific programs to prospective students already interested in pursuing those courses of study, rather than capturing the attention of prospects who may not yet be actively considering further education. A product-first message risks preemptively screening qualified leads who may be a great fit for the program, but who are not yet convinced of the value of returning to school.

Starting to Sound Familiar?

University and COE Missions Blend Together



Prospects Filter Out Transactional Ads



- ❌ Product-, not student-centric
- ❌ Fails to communicate compelling value proposition
- ❌ Only appeals to prospects who are actively evaluating programs

The above word cloud visualizes 88 college, university, and COE unit taglines and mission statements, which are clearly not attributable to any one institution. However, insofar as taglines and mission statements represent the foundation of an institution's brand and value proposition, such vagueness severely hinders a marketer's ability to craft a differentiated message to appeal to career changers. Generalized value propositions lead to generalized advertisements—such as the mocked-up Facebook advertisement on the right—which focus on program availability rather than program value. While such messages can appeal to students actively seeking the advertised program, messages that appeal to prospective student motivations and the emotional drivers of career change can reach a greater share of the professional student market.

Source: Kolowich S, "88 College Taglines, Arranged as a Poem," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 4, 2015, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/88-College-Taglines-Arranged/232003/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

COE Responses to Market Pressures Fall Short

Investments Wasted Without New Strategy

COE marketers often experiment with and pilot more innovative lead generation strategies than the rest of campus, owing to the difficulties in reaching and attracting their market of adult and working professional students. Diverse initiatives, from creating and hosting new and engaging marketing content, to developing market-driven programs and services, to articulating a quantitative outcomes-based value proposition all seek to compel these professional students to seek further education. However, such efforts still too often fall short of expectations.

Perceived Benefits of New Investments...



Launching New Content Creation Initiatives

- Tell relatable stories of successful past students
- Leverage social proof to support enrollment decisions



Offering Market-Driven Programs and Services

- Develop new programs aligned to industry needs
- Provide academic and career support to working students



Collecting and Displaying Outcomes Data

- Quantify the tangible career value of programs offered
- Convince skeptical, career-driven students to enroll

...Undone by All-too-Familiar Pitfalls

"Last year we set a goal to develop testimonial videos for every program in our portfolio. We accomplished that goal, but all those videos are just sitting unwatched in our YouTube channel."

Director of Marketing

"Despite major efforts to develop market-driven programs and competitive career support, enrollments have stayed flat. We still haven't managed to get our message in front of the right prospective students."

Dean of Professional Studies

"We've always known that collecting graduate outcomes data is the right thing to do, but our working adult students are very difficult to track post-graduation. We can't get them to complete our surveys."

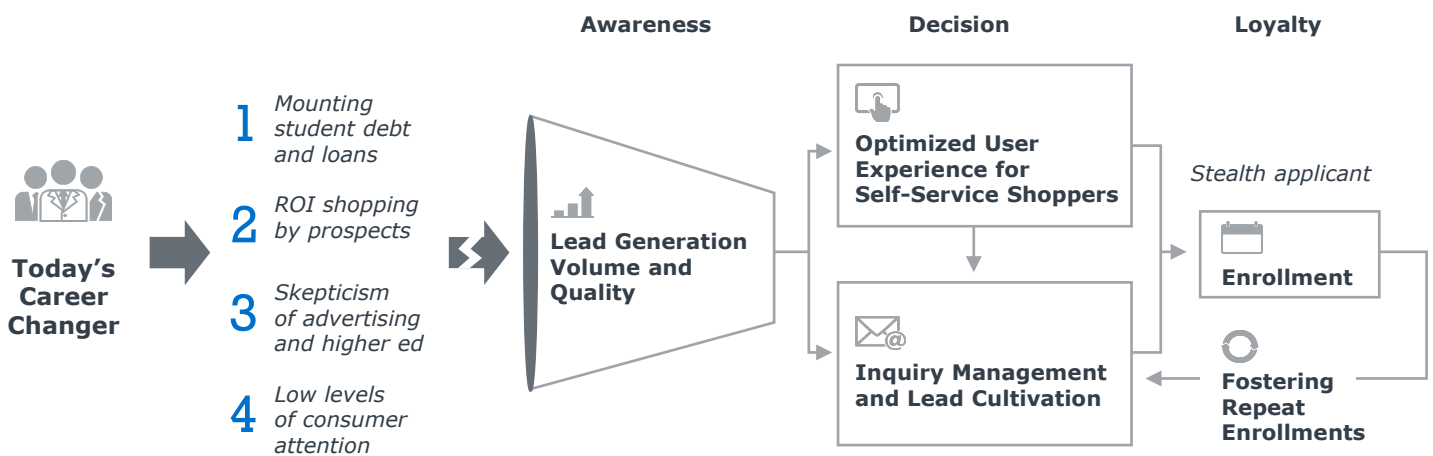
Associate Director of Online Education

New content marketing initiatives commonly seek to communicate relatable stories of successful graduates, using social proof to compel prospective students to enroll, but fall short when marketers cannot direct adequate traffic to testimonial videos hosted on a YouTube channel. Newly launched programs, aligned with demonstrable labor market demand, may experience underwhelming enrollments if marketers cannot put the right message in front of the right prospective student at the right point in their decision making journey. Efforts to collect outcomes data fail to achieve statistical significance when graduates neglect to complete the required surveys. COE marketers understand better than anyone else on campus how to attract adult and working professional students, but many still struggle to do so at scale.

Myriad Barriers Obstruct Traditional Funnel

Four forces—mounting student debt loan debt, increased ROI shopping by prospects, skepticism of advertising and higher education, and low levels of consumer attention—together represent the barriers that COE marketers must overcome to attract today’s career changer prospective student. Such forces prevent the traditional, program-first marketing approach to awareness building and lead generation from reaching COE units’ desired student populations. Successful recruitment efforts instead require a focus on the concrete value a given program will confer to a prospective student’s career aspirations, communicated through media-rich, multichannel outcomes marketing campaigns.

Four Forces Preventing Entry into Funnel

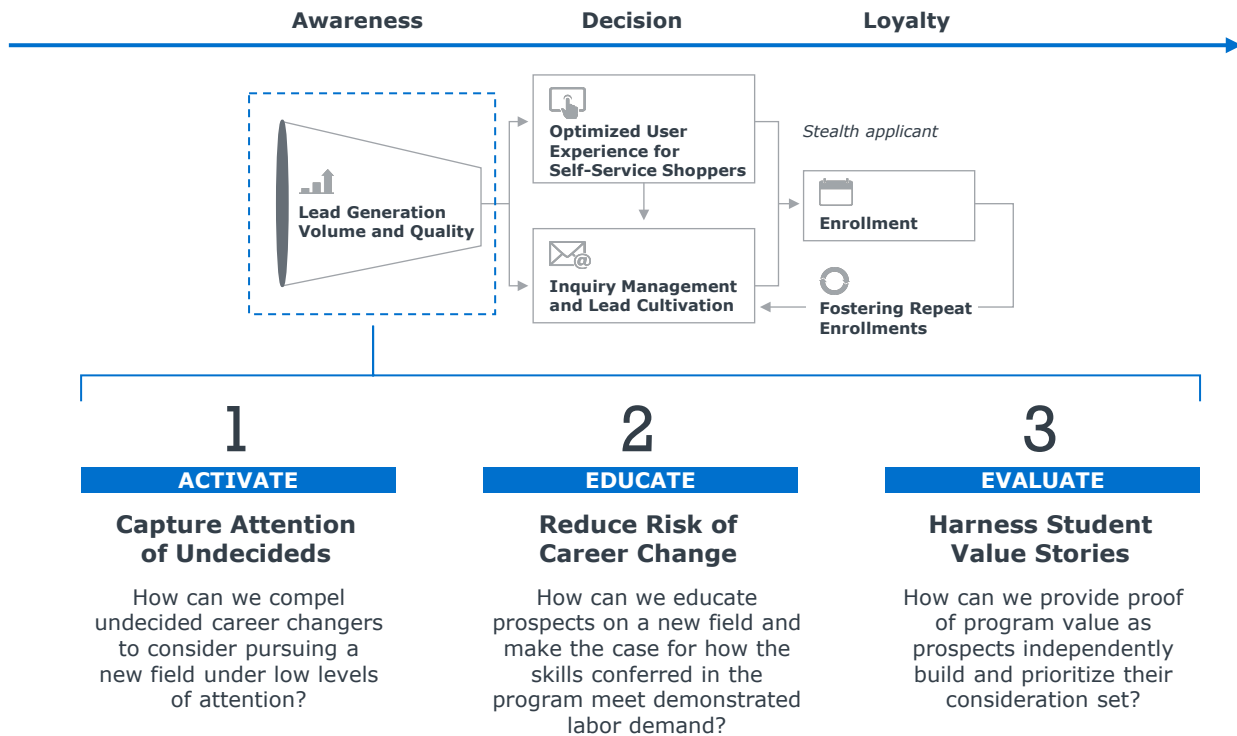


For the purposes of this study, the COE Forum defines outcomes marketing as campaigns using messages that provide evidence to prospective students of the tangible benefits of a program offering through:

- Labor market demand that demonstrates opportunities in a field of study (e.g., available job openings, expected job growth, average earnings by position).
- Success and validation of graduates (e.g., student testimonials, quantitative placement data, ratings and reviews, program rankings).

Outcomes Marketing and Today's Career Changer

The marketing and recruiting breakthrough practices profiled in the following pages are the product of over 100 research conversations with experts both within and outside higher education. The COE Forum's research this year subdivides into three sections, which roughly correspond to the decision journey of today's career changer prospective student, from awareness to application.



This study demonstrates how outcomes marketing can successfully capture the attention of undecided career changers, compel these prospective students to consider alternative fields and career paths, educate prospects on available programs and their link to career outcomes, and deploy student value stories and testimonials as social proof to accelerate the decision to apply and enroll towards the end of the decision journey.



Capture Attention of Undecideds

SECTION

- Practice 1: Tiered Content Pathway
- Practice 2: Personalized Labor Market Ad Campaign
- Practice 3: Contextualized Career Advancer Campaigns
- Practice 4: High-Propensity Affinity Groups

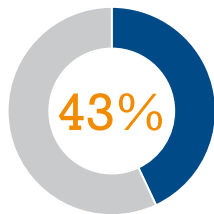
1

Despite Intentions, Career Change Barriers Persist

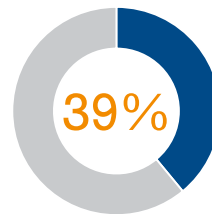
Common Obstacles Prevent Action

A substantial proportion of early- to mid-career professionals hope to change careers—as high as 75% of professionals in their 30s, according to Nielsen—which represents a large and relatively untapped market opportunity for COE units who offer the type of applied educational opportunities that could most benefit these individuals. However, career change is not without risk, and many of these professionals hesitate to leave comfortable or stable employment. Marketers must begin by capturing the attention of passive and active career seekers—respectively, professionals dissatisfied in their current roles but not making any career change effort, and professionals making an effort to search for other positions—and convincing them to explore alternative professional options.

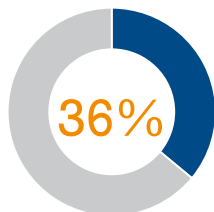
Most Commonly Reported Barriers to Career Change



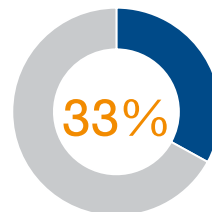
Lack of financial security



Uncertainty what career to choose



Lack adequate education or experience



Feel too old or advanced in current position

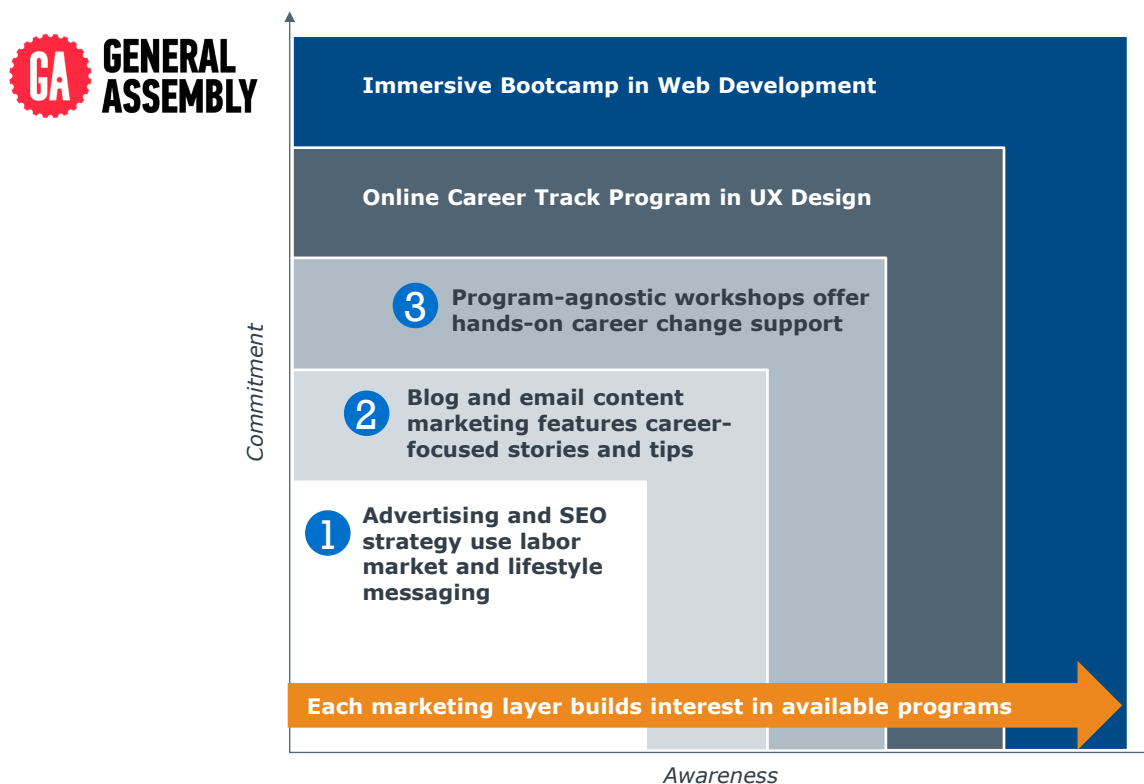
Even if an individual actively seeks to change careers, she faces financial, informational, educational, and emotional barriers to doing so. Marketers must seek to address and mitigate these barriers with their messaging. The most common barrier to career change is a lack of financial security, which marketing can assuage with information about available financial aid or labor market data related to estimated earnings. Marketers can address the pervasive uncertainty over what career to choose with educational content marketing related to available fields and occupations. Though many individuals feel they lack adequate education to make a career change, COE units can obviously offer an array of available programs. Marketers must connect with their audience, recognizing the practical and emotional challenges they face, and use their campaigns to offer solutions to those challenges.

Source: "U.S. Working Adult Career Survey," University of Phoenix School of Business, March 2015; EAB interviews and analysis.

Generating Interest from Passive Career Changers

Content Creates Value Without Ever Mentioning a Program

Bootcamp providers such as General Assembly have been incredibly successful at compelling large numbers of dissatisfied professionals to make relatively large career changes into programming, software development, and other tech-focused occupations. They do so in large part through their marketing strategy, which employs multiple “layers” of content, from promoted social media posts to blogs and other articles to hands-on information sessions. Such marketing rarely mentions a particular program or educational product until a prospective student is convinced of the value of entering a training program and hopes to learn more about available offerings.



Analysts refer to this type of layered marketing as generating “gravity” around a product or service, creating multiple opportunities for consumers to engage with a brand without necessarily making a purchase. As Jonathan Lau, founder of bootcamp directory and review platform Switchup.org argued: “Most bootcamp providers aren’t doing anything much more innovative than higher education. Their career support and other services aren’t necessarily better, and colleges and universities are even starting to create their own short, intensive programs. All bootcamp providers do is use their marketing to speak in terms that their students understand: career change, advancement, and earning potential.” COE units can capture market share from bootcamp providers by employing similar strategies in their marketing, built on the foundation of high quality programs that represent higher education’s competitive advantage in the applied education space. The following pages illustrate, step-by-step, how General Assembly attracts career changers’ attention and pulls them gradually towards their portfolio of programs.

Source: General Assembly website and affiliated advertising, <https://generalassembly.ly/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Triggering Emotional Drivers of Change

Create Ads That Prospects Won't Block

Before COE units can begin to convince career changers to enroll in their programs as a means to pursue a new professional opportunity, marketers must successfully capture their attention. Since direct enrollment solicitations are unlikely to catalyze action among these passive professionals, marketers' efforts must integrate seamlessly into prospects' behavior and context when they encounter the content. General Assembly's advertisements, particularly those on Facebook and other social media platforms, illustrate the strength of developing marketing collateral that mimics the type of information that browsers on these various media seek to consume while on the platform.

1 Facebook Promoted Posts Integrate Useful Content



Key Elements

Emotional Appeal

Ad copy speaks to target audience motivations

Program Agnostic

Advertisements offer interesting and useful content, rather than promote specific programs

Wide Applicability

Advertisements target broad psychographic and demographic profiles

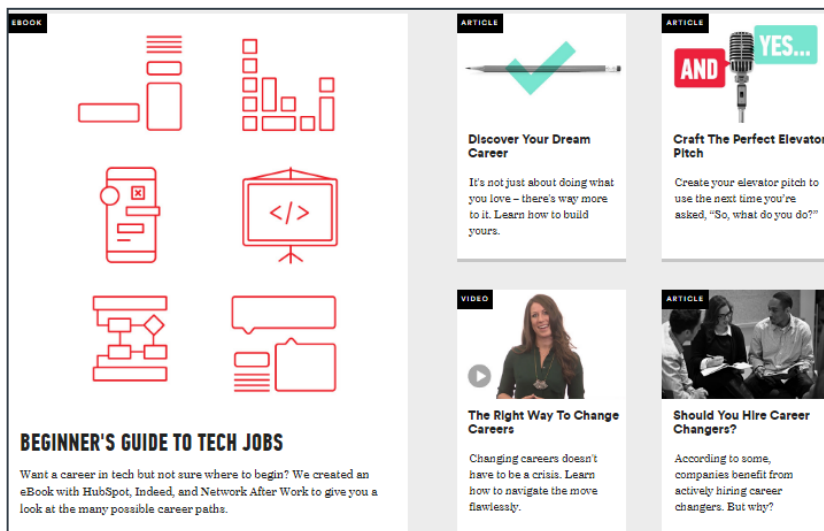
For example, Facebook users are more likely to engage with news and entertainment content than explicit solicitations to apply for or enroll in an academic program, because user goals and motivations on Facebook are more socially and information focused than on a professionally-oriented platform such as LinkedIn. Since many of today's career changers have not yet decided to return to school, and may not have even decided to actively seek new employment opportunities, marketing content must pique a viewer's interest and encourage her to learn more. Then, subsequent layers of content marketing can support the prospect's decision journey from passively interested to actively engaged, and ultimately to application and enrollment.

Connecting Initial Interest to Useful Content

Blog and Email Content Compel Further Exploration

Since consumer interest is so valuable in today's environment of ubiquitous advertising, low attention, and high skepticism, marketers who successfully capture it must immediately capitalize on any prospect engagement by offering low-commitment additional information to support a prospect's decision journey. Content hubs, such as blogs, represent a promising opportunity to increase prospect engagement with informational and entertaining content. General Assembly's blog "It Starts with Yes" offers visitors a wealth of career change-related articles and information, and begins to connect an a prospect's desire to pursue a new occupation with available educational programs across their portfolio.

2 "It Starts with Yes" Campaign and Blog



Key Elements



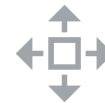
Educational

Broad primers on available tech positions from experts in the field



Immediately Useful

Actionable tips for successfully networking, preparing, applying, and interviewing for tech positions



Repurposeable

Numerous content tags and related sub-publications (e.g., interview, makers, coding) allows the blog to serve a widely diverse audience

While blogs and other types of content repositories do require an upfront investment of time and resources, along with regular contributions of new or refreshed content, successful initiatives can facilitate diverse prospect engagement at scale. General Assembly's blog remains largely program agnostic, allowing visitors to continue to explore their interest in potential career change without feeling the pressure of any direct sales pitch or enrollment solicitation. This approach, aligned to the consumer's motivations and emotional state, rather than focused on available products, has built trust between General Assembly and the population of aspiring career changers, and allowed General Assembly to achieve market primacy in career change education and training.

Source: "It Starts with Yes," General Assembly, <https://generalassemb.ly/it-starts-with-yes>; EAB interviews and analysis.

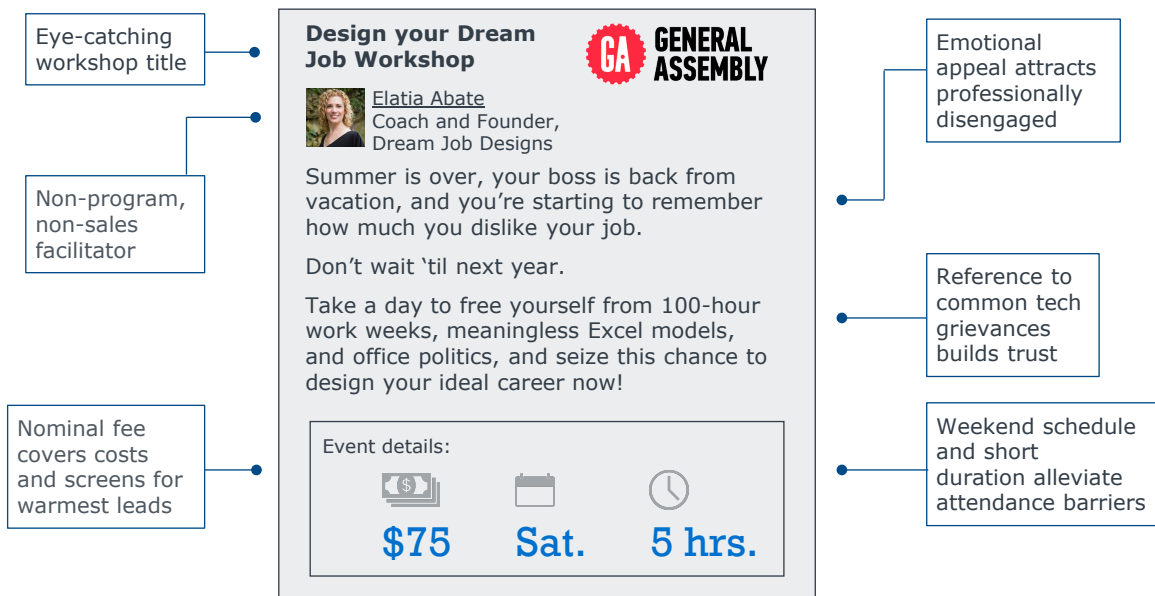
Offering a Low-Commitment Next Step

Program Agnostic Events Surface Warm but Undecided Leads

Once a prospective student has become aware of career change opportunities, and is interested in learning more but not yet committed to enrolling in a specific program, she often lacks a clear next step. While many COE units offer program-specific information sessions that convert attendees to enrollees at high rates, such sessions typically experience a low volume of interest since they most apply to prospective students interested in a specific field of study and intending to enroll imminently. Instead of relying solely on program-specific sessions, General Assembly has developed a series of “Design your Dream Job” workshops that offer a clear next step for interested prospective students, without pushing prospects to enroll immediately.

3 Emotional Appeals to Career Aspirations Over Program Promotion

Sample Workshop for Aspiring Career Changers



General Assembly’s program agnostic career changer workshop represents an inclusive, low-commitment in-person event that not only provides value for attendees, but also generates a warm leads list for General Assembly’s program marketing efforts. By charging a nominal fee to attend, event organizers not only cover their costs, but also screen for the highest propensity prospects with the greatest likelihood to apply and enroll. Though facilitators can direct any program-specific questions attendees may have to the relevant program lead, by not aligning these workshops to any specific available program, General Assembly ensures that these events remain relevant and open to the widest segment of their target market possible.

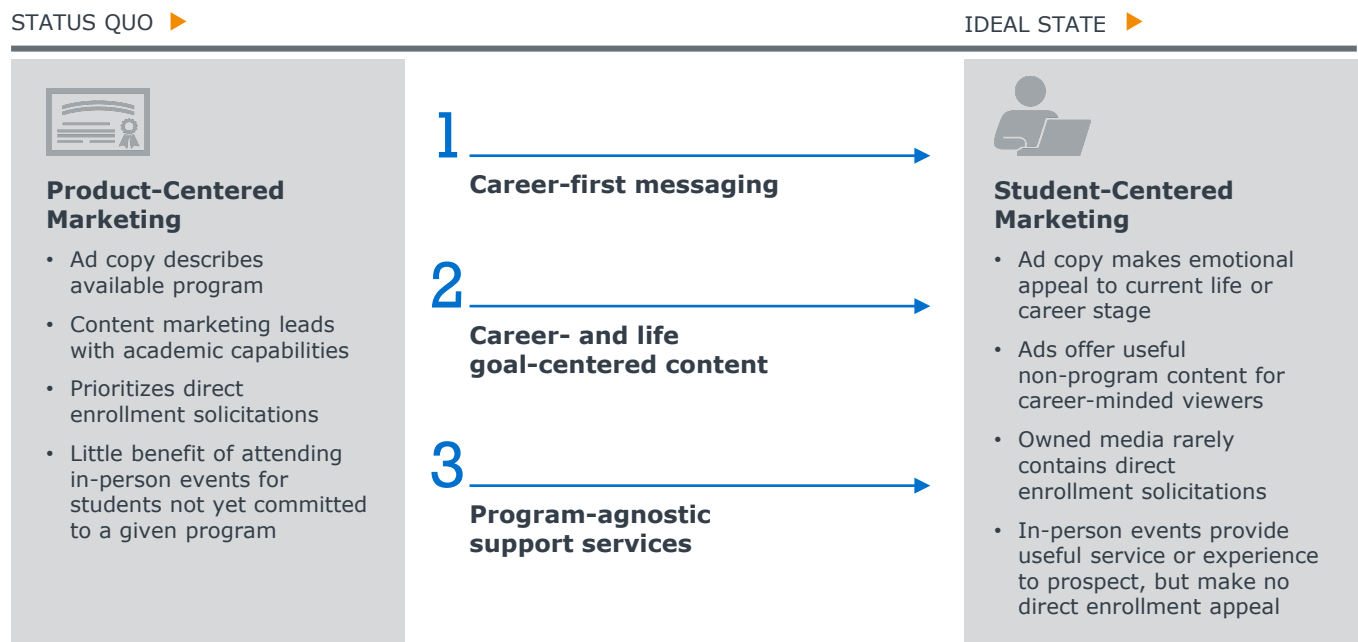
Source: “Design your Dream Job,” General Assembly, <https://generalassemb.ly/education/design-your-dream-job/san-francisco>; EAB interviews and analysis.

From Product- to Student-Centric Marketing

Small Modifications to Marketing Strategy Have Outsized Impact

General Assembly’s approach to layered, program-agnostic marketing that focuses heavily on an outcomes message represents an evolution in education marketing from a product-centered approach to a student-centered approach. Rather than populate ad copy with available program offerings, institutions must adjust their messages to align with the questions, concerns, motivations, and goals of their prospective student audience. In doing so, colleges and universities can dramatically expand their prospect pool to include quality students who might not be convinced of the immediate need to return to school.

Progressing from Status Quo to Ideal State Within Reach



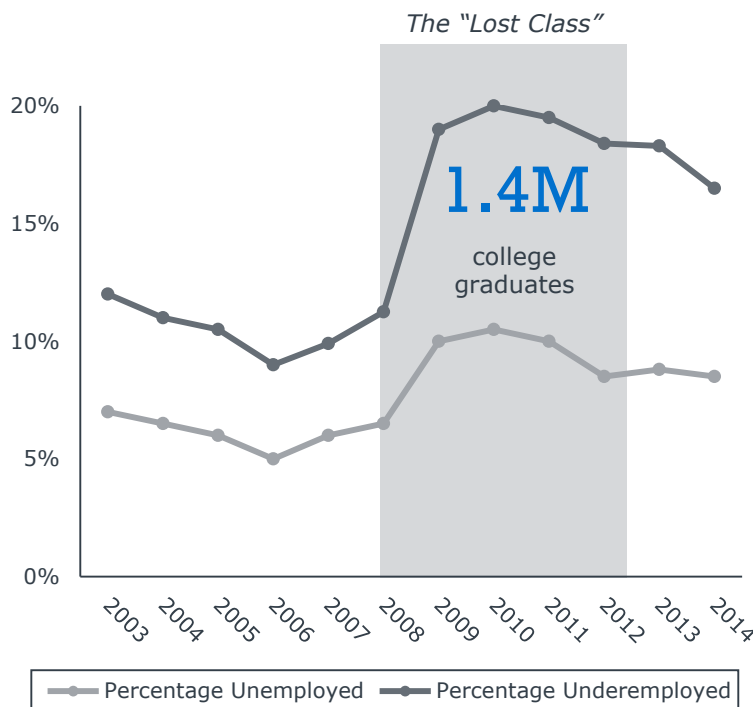
Above, the status quo marketing approach depicted on the left side of the page can progress towards the student-centered marketing approach depicted on the right across three primary dimensions. First, career-first messaging focuses on a desired outcome of education, rather than program details or faculty members’ academic credentials. Second, career- and life goal-centered content represents valuable information on its own, rather than simply conveying a direct enrollment solicitation. Finally, program-agnostic support services, including career and life coaching sessions rather than program-specific information sessions, build trust between an institution and its prospects by providing value in the short term rather than immediately soliciting an application.

Triggering Interest from Career Starters

Underemployed and Underpaid Professionals Present Ripe Market

Millennial professionals—those born between the mid-1980s and the early 2000s—represent a particularly receptive audience for marketing messages that address disconnection and discontent at work, and that advertise new professional opportunities. The below graphic, familiar to some readers, illustrates the sharp increase in un- and underemployed college graduates catalyzed by the Great Recession, many of whom still seek the dream job they hoped to secure immediately after graduation.

Un- and Underemployment by Graduation Year



Disengaged and in Debt

72%

Proportion of millennial professionals who report feeling dissatisfied with their current work

\$41k

Average student loan debt of millennials aged 18-35

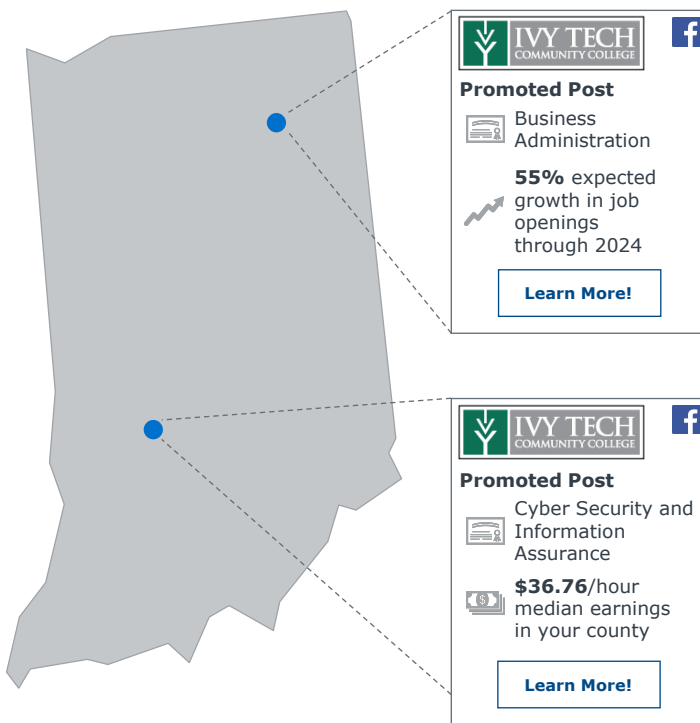
While millennials may represent an ideal market for market-driven COE programs, these prospective students are also among the most skeptical of higher education's return on investment. With an average of \$41,000 in student loan debt outstanding from previous college and university experiences, these professionals seek proof of a program's career value and are very hesitant to enroll without assurances of a positive career outcome. The following practices illustrate creative opportunities to attract the attention of prospective career changers using labor market data and professional interest and affinity groups.

Source: Davis A, Kimball W, and Shierholz H, "The Weak Economy Is Idling Too Many Young Graduates," Economic Policy Institute, May 2014; "Majority of Millennials Have 'No Idea' When Student Loans Will Be Paid Off," Bloomberg, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-04-07/majority-of-millennials-have-no-idea-when-student-loans-will-be-paid-off>; "Millennials Hate Their Jobs Even More Than You Do," Time, <http://time.com/money/4329859/millennials-work-engagement-indifference/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Achieving Personalization at Scale

Geotargeted Ads Highlight Relevant Career Opportunities

Both COE units and community colleges serve a diverse audience of nontraditional students, most of whom seek applied educational offerings directly related to available employment opportunities. These prospective adult and professional students increasingly require that marketers and program directors demonstrate the value that students can expect from enrolling in a given program. However, many institutions still lack the information or the messaging to answer those types of questions. To mitigate declining enrollments and address the career concerns of increasingly skeptical prospective students, Ivy Tech Community College’s director of marketing developed an integrated marketing campaign that highlights local and regional hiring trends, and how students can take advantage of those trends, rather than emphasizing specific programs.



Triggering Interest from Underemployed

-  Geotargeted advertisements highlight relevant local labor market data
-  Educational ads highlight career, not program, opportunities
-  Social media promoted posts allow for further segmentation based on desired demographic parameters
-  Labor market data infused in print collateral, website, and program pages to create fully integrated, multichannel marketing campaign

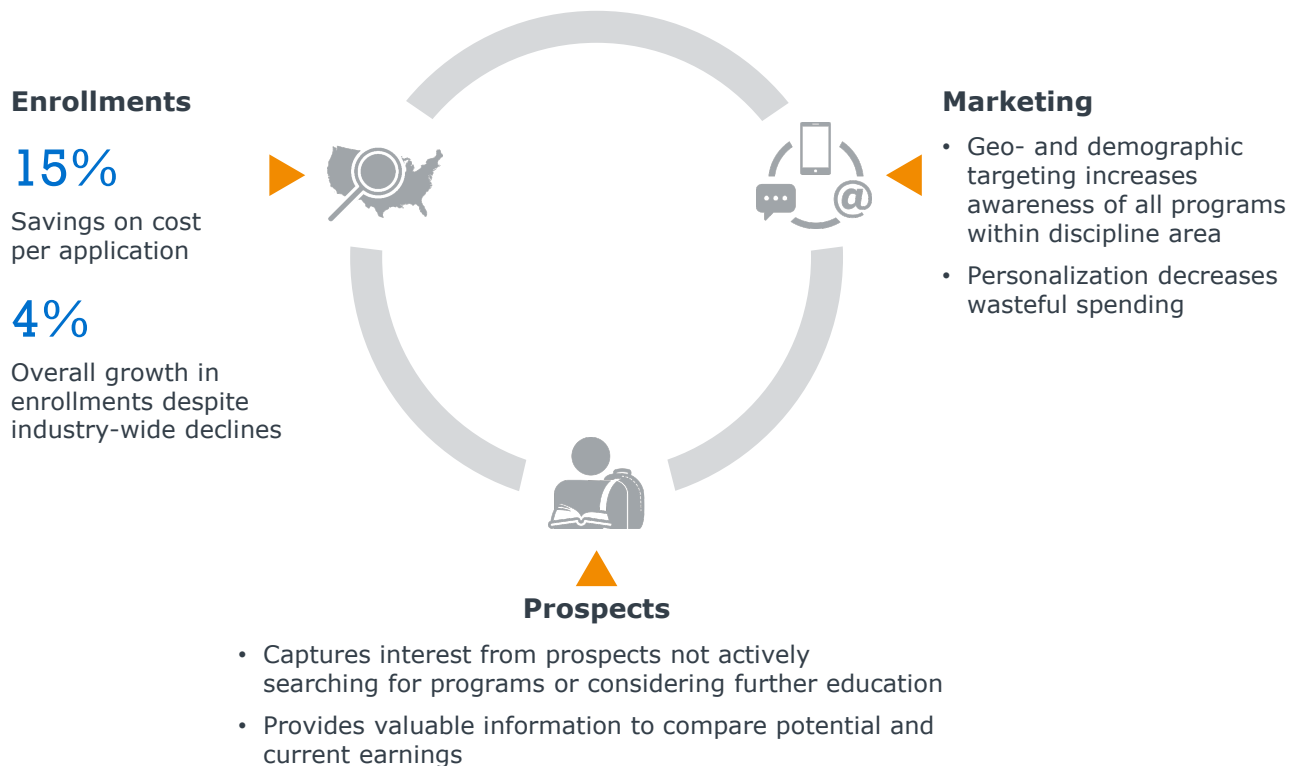
The first layer of the campaign relies on promoted posts on social media platforms such as Facebook, personalized to the career goals and motivations of Indiana’s working and middle classes. The advertisements use labor market data to highlight local career opportunities, focusing on a single occupation’s average earnings, projected job growth, or open positions. But, while social media advertisements represent a particularly effective aspect of the campaign, Ivy Tech’s website, print collateral, and other outreach strategies all contain similar labor market value propositions. For example, a prospective student who clicks a labor market advertisement will arrive at a webpage that organizes available program options around the advertised occupational opportunity.

Further, since Ivy Tech Community College operates numerous campuses across the state of Indiana, Ivy Tech’s director of marketing could personalize advertisements to reflect local employment opportunities, support state and local workforce development priorities, and highlight programs and training options unique to a given campus or satellite facility.

Reversing Declining Enrollments

Multichannel Campaign Resonates with Career Starters

The integrated career-focused marketing campaign at Ivy Tech resulted in demonstrable cost savings and enrollment gains, benefitted the marketing team, and supported prospective students and the local professional community by highlighting locally available applied educational options. First, because Ivy Tech charges no application fee, prospective student interest in labor market opportunities highlighted in digital advertisements easily converted into applications and, ultimately, enrollments. Ivy Tech experienced a 15% savings on their target cost per application as well as 4% overall enrollment growth despite double-digit industry-wide enrollment declines.



Focusing advertisements around occupational or labor market categories, rather than single programs, allowed the marketing team to more efficiently generate interest in all programs related to a given occupation. That efficiency, combined with the targeting capabilities that social media platforms provide, allowed the marketing team to reach a greater share of its target student population for a lower total cost. Lastly, prospective students received genuinely valuable informational content related to local employment opportunities, regardless of their decision to ultimately apply for and enroll in a given program.

Please see the "Program-to-Career Mapping Guide" tool on page 72 of this publication for further guidance.



Targeting Career Advancers

Integrating Labor Market Data into Organic LinkedIn Browsing

While marketing messages that incorporate labor market data can spark interest and catalyze enrollments among the un- and underemployed, this type of content can also attract career advancers—professionals currently employed in their preferred career field and seeking to secure a linear promotion. Career advancers often seek targeted skill building unique to their industry or field, requiring niche and cutting edge programs that are difficult to promote. At Seton Hall’s School of Law, marketing leaders were able to use labor market data in program advertisements on LinkedIn to build awareness and demand for new offerings that students would not otherwise know to search for.

Labor Market Data Resonates with Career-Focused LinkedIn Users...

Seton Hall School of Law Sponsored

NYC area employer demand for financial services compliance professionals is growing like never before. Learn more about how you can advance in this field.

31%
Job Growth

150K
Job Openings

3x
Demand in NYC area

[Learn More!](#)

...and Prompts Further Research on Landing Page

Employer Demand Over Time

31% Job Growth

150k Job Openings

3x Demand in NYC area

2024 Super growth through

Employer demand for graduate-level financial services compliance professionals is on the rise. Help us break down the size of the market, where to find the jobs, the most sought after skills, and how you can prepare yourself to meet the demand.

Desired Skills

As expected, national employers seek Graduate-Level Financial Services Compliance Professionals for compliance and risk management roles.

Salaries exceed \$75,000

81% of national postings with specified salaries

Prepare Yourself

Seton Hall Law School offers multiple graduate programs in financial services compliance. Find out more about our facilities, online programs for non-lawyers and lawyers in the growing field.

Name	
Email	
Job Title	

Benefits of Sponsored Advertising on LinkedIn



Targeting available by employment status, education, and profession to increase awareness among qualified leads



Career-related ads unobtrusively provide relevant, useful information on professional platform

Following customized market-responsive program development research conducted by the COE Forum, Seton Hall’s School of Law decided to launch an MSJ in Financial Services Compliance, a field for which considerable employer demand in the local New York and New Jersey markets existed. Unfortunately, given the program’s niche subject matter and stringent prerequisite requirements, few prospective students actively searched, or applied, for the degree.

Using data from the market demand brief that helped launch the program, the marketing team created a simple infographic, shown on the right side of the page, illustrating the career opportunity and professional value associated with the program. The team created a series of LinkedIn sponsored posts to advertise the program, featuring data points such as the number of job openings, expected job growth, and average salary. The advertisements linked back to the infographic, hosted on a program-specific landing page.

Marketing and Enrollment Gains

Labor Market-Driven Campaign Captures Advancer Attention

The marketing campaign fueled immediate growth in program applications and enrollments, leading faculty members to create an additional certificate to accommodate student demand. Since the program sought to enroll currently employed professionals, LinkedIn's ability to segment its user base by education, employment, and other attributes allowed Seton Hall's marketing team to ensure that only qualified leads received their advertisements. Further, since LinkedIn users typically navigate the platform with professional advancement in mind—rather than the more entertainment-seeking social behavior endemic to platforms like Facebook—career-focused marketing messages are much more likely to resonate.

Sponsored Post Outperforms LinkedIn Benchmarks

2x

Click-through Rate

1.7x

Engagement Rate

Program Enrollment Growth Exceeds Expectations

>100%

Growth in inquiries and applications

>50%

Growth in enrollments

- + Program now on par with highest performers in the portfolio
- + Additional certificate created in response to student demand

Results Increase Marketing's Visibility

“After seeing how we could use labor market data to our advantage, faculty and administration have increasingly asked for my support, from program development through to marketing, and I'm brought into those discussions much earlier than I was before.”

*Director of Marketing,
Seton Hall School of Law*

Additional Value of Infographic on the Horizon



Host full infographic on website



Provide to school's recruiters



Incorporate in lead nurturing campaigns

The success of the LinkedIn advertising campaign also increased the marketing team's visibility within the law school, and has resulted in increased collaboration between marketing, program directors, and faculty members. Academic partners, eager to capitalize on the marketing team's ability to attract professional students to niche program offerings, now consult the marketing team much earlier in the program development phase, and solicit marketing's input throughout program launch and maintenance.

Please see the “Program-to-Career Mapping Guide” tool on page 72 of this publication for further guidance.

Entering an Era of Hypertargeting

Digital Ads Enable Segmentation by Demographics, Location, and Behavior

Not only does online advertising align with the communication preferences of today's consumers, but also it allows organizations to better target their marketing investments. Many online advertising platforms allow organizations to deliver ads to specific audiences defined by their demographics, location, or behavior.



Demographics

Adjust target audience based on age, gender, education, or income

Example:

- Advertise cybersecurity master's program to adult males age 25-35 with bachelor's degree



Location

Place ads in designated regions, neighborhoods, or individual buildings

Example:

- Promote satellite campus programs to individuals within 50-mile radius of branch location



Behavior

Present ads to particular groups of individuals based on past browsing activity

Example:

- Insert financial planning certificate ads on Facebook newsfeeds of those who frequent financial news sites

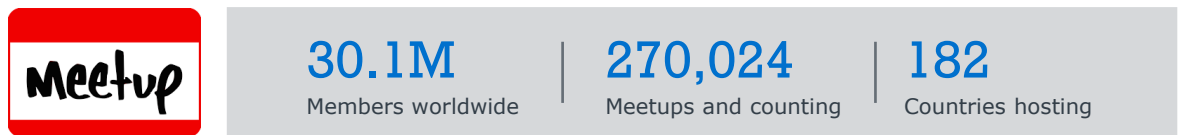
These increasingly sophisticated targeting capabilities allow COE units to focus their limited advertising budgets on high-yield audiences. For example, on many popular advertising platforms, units can deliver marketing messages to audiences within the same age, occupational category, or geographic range as current students. Moreover, on platforms such as Facebook, ads may even target audiences with demonstrated interest in a specific field based on the pages they "like" and "follow."

Capitalizing on the Influencer Effect

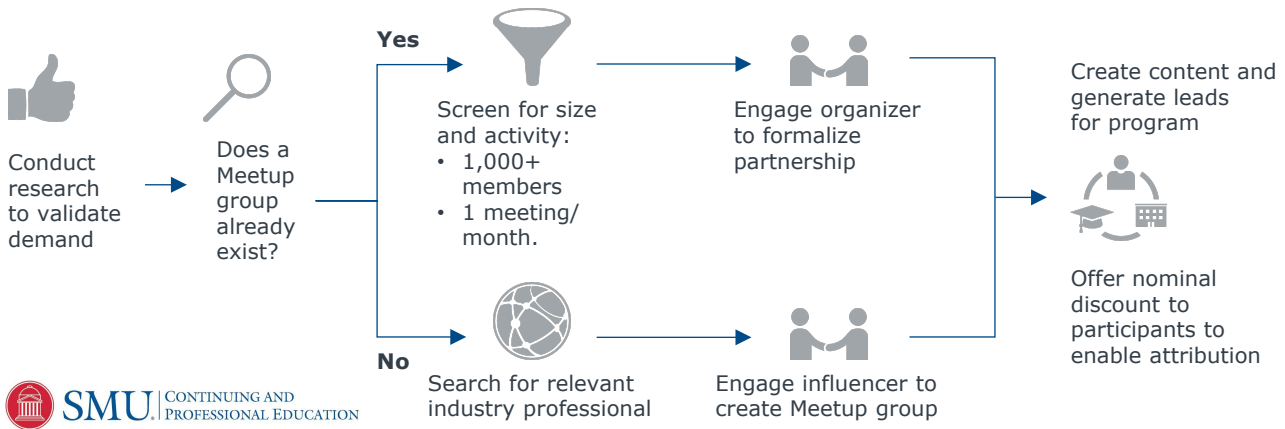
Interest Groups Offer Ready-Made Leads List

While marketers can deploy labor market data in digital advertising and social media campaigns to capture student interest, often prospective COE students cannot be easily identified or reached. These students may be interested in a particular field or topic, but commonly used digital tools cannot always quantify or track such interest. In such cases, communities of interest and affinity groups, particularly those organized around a known individual or “influencer” within a given professional space, can provide a ready-made leads list for new and proposed COE programs. Southern Methodist University’s Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) unit applies this approach to the popular digital platform Meetup.com to attract professional interest to new or proposed programs.

Global Platform Facilitates Organic Communities of Interest...



...and Offers Multiple Opportunities to Generate Interest and Leads



Meetup.com is a global platform that enables users to create communities around shared personal and professional interests. The above graphic illustrates the CAPE team’s approach to developing partnerships with existing Meetup groups, and creating new ones where a group does not already exist. Once the team’s program specialist, responsible for new program ideation and launch, has identified a promising new program development opportunity, she searches Meetup.com for existing groups related to that topic. Where a group exists, the specialist will begin attending Meetup events and connect with the organizer, hoping to formalize a partnership whereby SMU can cosponsor events and provide meeting space in exchange for access to the group and the organizer’s support in developing and teaching in resulting courses or certificate programs. The program specialist will typically screen existing groups for size and activity, ensuring that she only attends popular Meetups.

Where a group does not already exist, the program specialist will search for a relevant industry professional with a large following, using blogs and social media to identify and contact a potential co-organizer for a new Meetup group.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

You Can't Buy This Kind of Salesforce

Marketing Realizes Benefits from New and Existing Groups

The below graphic illustrates two successful Meetup group partnerships. In the first, CAPE's program specialist approached a large and successful user experience Meetup group, organized by the leading UX professional in the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area. After formalizing CAPE's partnership with the group and recruiting the organizer to help develop and teach in a UX certificate program, the Meetup group has become the primary recruitment vehicle for the program. CAPE's program specialist is able to notify Meetup group members of program start dates, and offer discounted rates for attendees to both encourage and attribute enrollment.

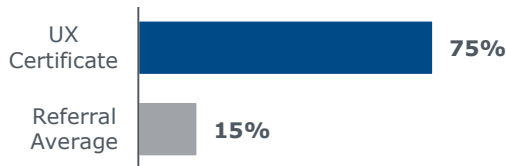
Tap into Existing Groups...



"Dallas User Experience Group"

2,341 Current Meetup members

Unprecedented Percentage of Organic Leads



...or Create New Groups



"DFW Data Visualization and Infographics"

\$50 Nominal fee to create new Meetup group

1,404 Current Meetup members

~30 Average attendees per Meetup

Key Steps to Implementation

EAB Recommendations



Allocate staff time to identifying topics and speakers



Prioritize new group creation in fields without existing Meetups



Select facilitators with large and active groups of followers



Calibrate existing group threshold criteria based on market size

In the second example, CAPE's program specialist hoped to develop a data visualization certificate, but no local data visualization Meetup group or professional organization existed. Instead, she identified a popular local data visualization professional with a large blog and social media following, and approached him to solicit his support in leading a Meetup group and helping to design and teach in a new data visualization program.

CAPE's program specialist offered a number of recommendations, enumerated at the bottom of the slide, to members interested in leveraging Meetup groups in their respective recruitment areas. Most importantly, she noted that while Meetup groups technically cost only a nominal fee, staff time required to develop new content and event ideas for groups, coordinate speakers, and arrange space can be prohibitive. Meetup group co-organizers—a known industry professional or influencer—should be primarily responsible for the group's day-to-day functioning, allowing CAPE to minimize staff time and effort.

Benefits Beyond Enrollments

Beyond the quantitative benefits to enrollment, cultivating in-person communities of professional interest through Meetup.com has benefitted the CAPE team in numerous ways. Program specialists can use Meetup group attendance and participation to measure interest in a proposed program and size the market in advance of program launch. Program leads can use group events to audition potential instructors from among the local professional community. Marketing can decrease its costs and increase efficacy by following up with Meetup attendees who have indicated interest in a given program.



Increase Marketing Efficiency

Marketing able to reallocate investment to other priorities



Size Market for Proposed Program

Membership size and activity provides proxy for market opportunity



Identify Potential Instructors

Presenters observed and vetted for potential instructor positions



Understand Local Professional Needs

Gain insight into specific topical areas of focus and interest



Surface Warmest Program Leads

Member list offers contact information for follow up to warm leads

“ Meetup groups are truly a win-win-win for everyone involved. I get to test and market new program ideas, attendees receive useful (and free) professional development, and instructors get to build their brands and even recruit students right out of the group.”

Program Specialist, SMU CAPE

Meetup groups, and other in-person communities of professional interest such as professional organizations, represent an effective form of engagement marketing that allows self-selecting prospects to derive practical value from event attendance, CAPE staff to vet new program ideas, and local professionals to build their personal brands and even recruit event attendees into new positions.

Additionally, while CAPE staff use Meetup.com to engage local communities of interest, the platform could be used to engage with international communities interested in education abroad, or professional development aligned with your unit's program portfolio.

Please see the “Affinity Group Partnership Guide” tool  on page 82 of this publication for further guidance.

Capture Attention of Undecideds

The practices in this section illustrate creative strategies to capture the attention of prospective career changers and compel them to learn more about available career opportunities under low levels of attention and high degrees of skepticism. The nine questions below can support COE leaders and decision makers in assessing their current approach to differentiating their offerings in the crowded COE market and attracting undecided career changer students. Use the below questions to guide discussions with marketing leaders to inform and improve marketing practice.

Key Takeaway

Compel undecided career changers to consider pursuing a new position or field under low levels of attention through awareness building strategies that focus on increasing and/or changing demand in the labor market.

Nine Questions to Cut Through the Noise



Trigger Interest

- 1 What ads do we run that trigger interest from passive observers?
- 2 Are ads designed to spark further exploration in a field?
- 3 Do ads integrate into the context of the platform on which they run?



Demonstrate Value and Services

- 4 How are the services and potential career impact of programs featured in marketing?
- 5 What is the ratio of valuable to promotional content that we've created?
- 6 Does content align with the early stages of the decision making process?



Tap into Affinity Groups

- 7 What interest groups current exist in our catchment area?
- 8 Do these groups align with our strategic growth areas?
- 9 Do we have programs to serve the profile of current participants?



Reduce Risk of Career Change

SECTION

2

- Practice 5: Segment-Specific Service Plans
- Practice 6: Interactive Career Assessment Tool
- Practice 7: New Career Exploration Guide
- Practice 8: Integrated Career Guidance Portal

Not Addressing the Full Range of Questions

Prospect Priorities Disconnected from Web Content

Once a COE marketer has highlighted an attractive career change opportunity and captured a prospective student's attention, that prospect will still require additional information before she decides to apply or enroll in a given program. Most COE leaders optimize their websites for quickly communicating logistical details about the programs in their portfolio, including price, prerequisites, and time to completion, which are certainly important. However, prospective career changers require additional information about a given program before they can be convinced to apply and enroll.

Primary Factors Influencing MBA and Master's Students to Pursue Further Education



54%

Seeking a higher salary



48%

Need to upskill to be successful



48%

Passion for learning



32%

Develop leadership skills

Majority of COE Websites Not Addressing These Questions

COE Forum Audit of Selected Websites			
<i>Most Sought-After Information</i>	<i>Availability of Information</i>		
	COE Unit:	Program Info:	Career Info:
Program Comparison Info:			
1. Cost	1. Unit A	4	1
2. Program offerings	2. Unit B	3	2
3. Financial aid	3. Unit C	3	1
4. Time to completion	4. Unit D	3	1
	5. Unit E	4	2
Career Exploration:	6. Unit F	4	1
1. Labor market data	7. Unit G	3	3
2. Career map	Average:	3.4	1.6
3. Outcomes			
4. Testimonials			

Capturing the "how," but not the "why"

The graphic on the right side of the page illustrates the various types of the information that institutional and unit websites can display, as well as their rate of occurrence across seven COE unit websites audited. While all websites contained a wealth of information that allows prospective students to compare programs across logistical dimensions, far fewer contained evidence of a program's career value. Labor market data, potential career maps, student outcomes data, and testimonials appear much less frequently than logistical details, though prospective career changers not yet convinced of the value of returning to school require the former much more than the latter. COE unit websites must support a prospective student's career exploration, empowering prospects to research potential career paths on their own, and providing helpful links to available programs once a prospect decides to pursue a new professional opportunity.

Source: "Connecting with Today's Prospective Students: How marketers can best influence the student decision journey," LinkedIn, August 2015; EAB interviews and analysis.

Activated Career Changers Still Need Answers

Marketing Must Address Multiple Levels of Prospective Student Needs

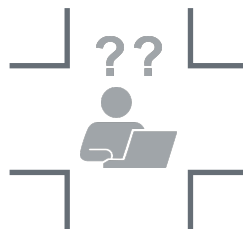
While the information needs of all career changers differ fundamentally from prospective students who already know which program they hope to pursue, career changer information needs can even evolve over time depending on an individual's progression along the decision making journey. The COE Forum has identified four personas of the career changer student market, illustrated in the graphic below, that represent the varied motivations, fears, and goals that impact decision making. Prospects from different segments, at different stages in their decision journey, require unique information and validation when they reach an institution or unit's website, and marketers must be prepared to share relevant and useful information, at the right point in time, for each of the personas below.

Hesitant Returner

- Prospect **wants to complete degree**, but worries about her ability to achieve that goal
- Marketing illustrates **support services available** to degree completers

Directionless Drifter

- Prospect has **no idea** what career or program to pursue
- Marketing supports **high-level career exploration** using labor market data



Aspiring Career Changer

- Prospect has position in mind but needs to **understand viable educational pathways**
- Marketing illustrates program pathways to **desired career outcomes**

Skeptical Enrollee

- Prospect has program in mind but needs to **understand career benefit**
- Marketing provides examples of careers **aligned to various programs**

Hesitant returners have achieved some college credits or experience and hope to return to obtain their full degree in order to pursue additional career opportunities, but worry about their ability to persist through a full program. Directionless drifters hope to make a career change, but have not yet decided on a specific career path or professional opportunity. Aspiring career changers have decided which career they hope to pursue, but have not yet determined whether or how further education can support their pursuit. Finally, skeptical enrollees are attracted to a particular program, but still hope to understand the tangible career benefit of enrollment prior to applying.

Differentiating on Services for Degree Completers

Homepage Guides Visitors to Relevant Content According to Motivation

Many COE units and adult-serving institutions offer an array of degree completion options for students who have obtained some college credit, but often struggle to effectively advertise the support services available to their prospective students. While career changers and advancers seek the tangible labor market value of a given degree, hesitant returners—students who hope to return to school but are not confident in their ability to complete—instead prioritize the support services available to them. To mitigate the concerns of the aspiring degree completers it seeks to serve, the University of Colorado at Boulder Continuing Education (CE) division developed unique service plans personalized to the needs of three distinct personas of degree completers, and oriented its website to those students' primary motivations, questions, and concerns, rather than the unit's portfolio of programs.

THIS IS YOUR MOMENT

Get Ahead

CE's classes can offer more control over your schedule so you can accomplish more, focus on new subject areas, and complete your degree on your schedule.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

Stay On Track

Whether you need flexibility to accommodate extra curricular activities or study abroad, or a plan to change directions, CE can help you stay on track to reach your goals.

MAKE A PLAN

Catch Up

Academic difficulty or a full-time job threatening your goals? CE's personal advising and flexible offerings can help you recover your footing and make a plan that works for you.

FIND YOUR PATH

Key Elements

1

Action-based messaging corresponds to most common student personas

2

Content speaks directly to specific motivations and goals of target audiences

3

Call-to-action links to unique infographic featuring a testimonial and tailored service plan

CU Boulder CE, which primarily serves main campus students seeking flexible delivery options, sought to better understand their prospective students and understand how best to meet their diverse needs. The marketing team conducted in-depth research, including student focus groups, to identify three distinct segments of prospective CE students. High-achieving "Get Ahead" students sought flexible CE programs to fit more into their undergraduate experience than average students. "Stay on Track" students sought to balance work, life, and school with CE's flexible offerings. Struggling "Catch Up" students required more personalized support than on-campus advisors could provide.

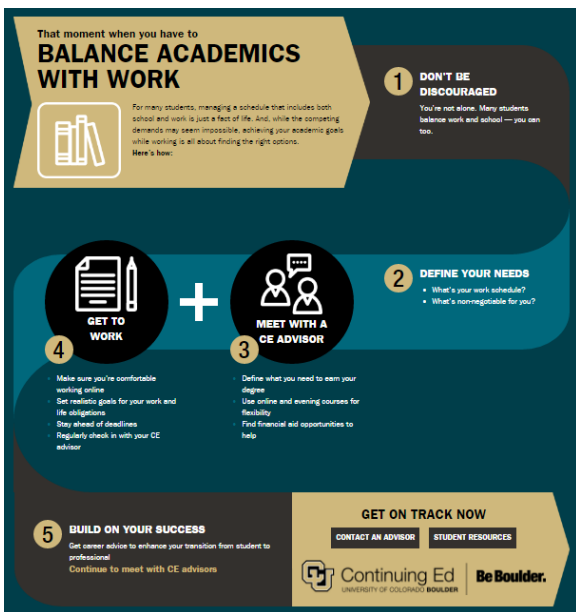
The team realized that CE's website, formerly optimized towards a single course search, was not effectively serving their prospective students, many of whom did not know exactly what course they needed or wanted to take when they reached the website. Instead, the marketing team redesigned the site to focus on their students' needs, and developed segment-specific service plans—detailed on the following pages—to support each distinct group.

Source: University of Colorado at Boulder Continuing Education, <https://ce.colorado.edu/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Service Plan Personalized to Prospect Goals

Tailored Messaging on Resources and Support

Prospective students who select one of CU Boulder CE's segment options, featured prominently on the main CE homepage, are given the chance to view a persona-specific testimonial video and receive a tailored service plan in the form of an infographic such as the one depicted below. Each service plan includes a desired call to action, typically scheduling a meeting with a CE advisor, and prospective students are encouraged to download and share the resource as well.



Next Steps Aligned to Motivations

- Design persona-specific plans that clearly outline relevant institutional services and resources
- Reposition purpose of advising services according to student motivations (e.g., career advice, academic support, financial support)
- Connect to high-conversion calls to action, like scheduling an advising session
- Combine with digital campaigns to serve relevant messages based on demographic criteria

While each service plan appears similar in design and structure, the language and guidance is unique to each segment, allowing for personalized support at scale. The way in which advisors provide support, for example, differs depending on the segment, offering career guidance, providing scheduling assistance, and navigating financial aid options.

In addition to redesigning the CE website, the marketing team launched a digital awareness campaign for current CU Boulder students, geofenced to the Boulder metropolitan area and personalized based on demographic criteria, to serve relevant support messages to students potentially in need of CE programs and services.

Boosting Interest and Conversions

Student-Centric Approach Captures Prospect Attention

The website redesign, supported by digital marketing efforts, resulted in significant increases in traffic to the website, number of unique users, and time spent on the website. Most importantly, the inclusion of segment-specific service plans has led to a dramatic increase in advising appointments, so much so that the CE team has had to rethink its strategy to meet such unexpected demand with limited advising resources.



“ By putting a course search front and center on our website, we were assuming students knew what they needed. With our new design based on student needs, we decided to put the student, rather than our product, first.”

*Ted Rockwell, Marketing Director
CU Boulder Continuing Education*

As CU Boulder CE’s director of marketing notes in the above quote, the goal of the website redesign was to rethink how CE staff positioned and communicated their programs and services to prospective students, shifting from a product-first to a student-first approach.

Please see the “Outcomes Marketing Self-Audit” tool on page 68 of this publication for further guidance.



Filtering Program Options by Career Interests


Interactive Tool Provides Support to Directionless Prospects

While hesitant returner students are convinced of the value of returning to school, and require messages of support rather than proof of program ROI, directionless drifter students are much farther from making the decision to enroll, and instead seek support exploring various potential career paths. Rasmussen College, a for-profit institution with a focus on applied educational programs, designed its own online, interactive career assessment as part of a hub of informational content designed to support aspiring career changers.

Rasmussen College Career Assessment Tool

Key Elements

- 1 Intuitive slider allows users to filter careers by skill and interest areas
- 2 Provides list of best-fit careers, and links to more information about careers and programs
- 3 Users may personalize results further based on salary needs, education level, and career growth



Match Your Skills to the Career That's Right for You!

<p>Artistic ⓘ</p> <p>None High</p> <p>Interpersonal ⓘ</p> <p>None High</p> <p>Communication ⓘ</p> <p>None High</p> <p>Managerial ⓘ</p> <p>None High</p>	<p>Mathematics ⓘ</p> <p>None High</p> <p>Mechanics ⓘ</p> <p>None High</p> <p>Science ⓘ</p> <p>None High</p>
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Suggest Careers That Match My Skills

Filter by Salary, Expected Growth, and Education

2

3

Of course, career assessment tools vary substantially in quality and validity, particularly open access online resources. Rasmussen's interactive tool, and similar tools offered by other institutions, is not meant to offer definitive guidance on a user's ideal career path. Rather, the tool itself represents a "sticky" interactive resource that offers prospective students a reason to return to the institution's website over time, and to share the tool with friends. Additionally, prospects can use the tool to brainstorm potential career options at a very high level, as many assessment results link to more in-depth career guides that provide additional detail concerning a given occupation's professional and educational requirements, duties and responsibilities, average earnings, and more. Developing in-depth career guides for prospective students helps to narrow potential career and program choices for directionless drifters, and accelerate decision making for aspiring career changers.

Accelerating New Career Decision Making

In-Depth Guides Support Additional Career Exploration

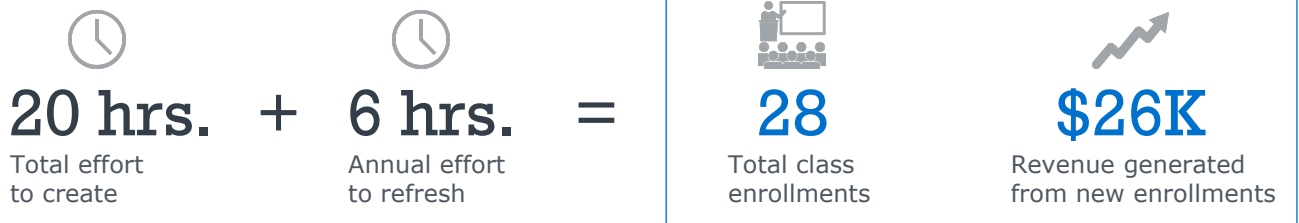
Once a prospective career changer has become interested in a given professional opportunity, she will require additional information about the field and likely seek to understand what educational or training options can best support securing a new position. Career guides represent an effective method to educate aspiring career changers about a given field, including types of positions, skills and competencies required, and top employers. The University of California at Davis Extension’s marketing team employs career guides to present a compelling case for career change using labor market data and qualitative information related to employee satisfaction or work-life balance, and to present available education options that can help prepare prospects to pursue employment in the field.

Elements of Effective New Career Guide at UC Davis Extension



<p>1 Educates Prospects on the Field</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupations and positions • Skills and competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring employers • Geographical hotspots
<p>2 Makes the Case for Career Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available job openings and expected growth • Average earnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction data • Work-life balance or alignment with worldview
<p>3 Connects to Conferred Skills</p>	<p>“ Check out the demand, then come get the skills you need to start your new career.”</p>	

Enrollment Gains from Career Starters



UC Davis Extension’s marketing team developed a number of guides to support recruitment across the program portfolio, including an “IT Jobs Report” that presents high level information related to a numerous IT occupations. The Extension’s director of marketing shared that the IT Jobs Report took approximately 20 hours of up-front effort to create, and six hours annually to update the data and ensure the report remains relevant. Though the marketing team cannot definitively attribute enrollments to any one specific piece of marketing collateral, they were able to identify at least 28 total enrolled students who had at some point downloaded the resource, resulting in \$26,000 in tuition revenue for the unit.

Please see the “Program-to-Career Mapping Guide” tool on page 72 of this publication for further guidance.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

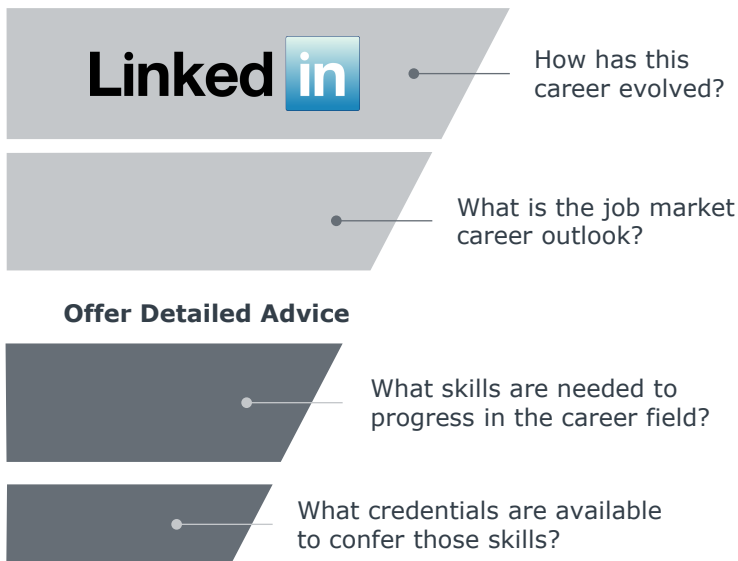
Building Urgency for Career Advancers

Taking a Page from the Private Sector

While career changers seek basic information related to a given professional opportunity, career advancers require more detailed insight and recommendations about how to accelerate their professional trajectories with targeted education and skill building. To support recruiters seeking to become managers and talent leaders, LinkedIn developed the "Savvy Recruiter's Guide" to explain how the field has evolved, what skills are needed to advance, and what credentials are available to confer those skills.

LinkedIn's "Savvy Recruiter's" Career Guide

Make the Case for Getting Ahead



Educational and Prescriptive



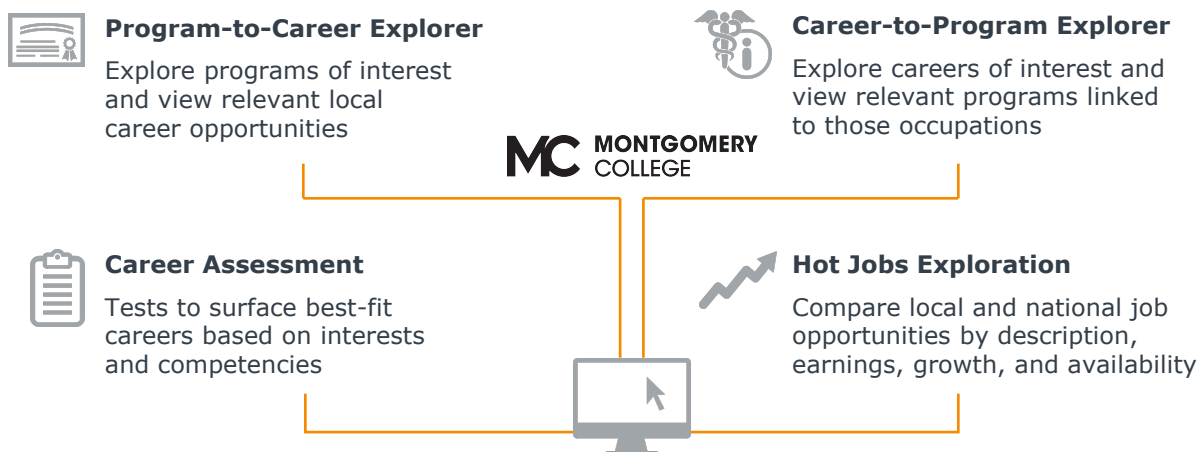
The "Savvy Recruiter's Guide" provides practical value to aspiring career advancers without pressuring viewers towards any particular purchase. However, with its recent purchase of Lynda.com, LinkedIn is able to direct users who download the resource to relevant training videos and skill-building opportunities on the platform itself. By focusing on how the field is currently changing or evolving, LinkedIn can create urgency for prospective students to enroll in educational or training programs to ensure that their skills remain relevant.

Please see the "Program-to-Career Mapping Guide" tool on page 72 of this publication for further guidance.

Helping Career Starters Research Opportunities

Once a prospective student has decided to enter a new field, or pursue a given program of study, COE units and institutions must continue to formalize the connection between their programs and desired career outcomes. While marketers can create collateral to illustrate the career value of their program portfolio, many technical solutions exist to formalize the program-to-career link. To meet the needs of its current and prospective students Montgomery College (MC), a community college in Maryland, partnered with EMSI’s Career Coach tool, an online resource that allows users to explore EMSI’s labor market data and integrates those data with a client institution’s available programs.

EMSI “Career Coach” Tool at Montgomery College



Critical Elements

- ▶ Interactive, self-service web resources
- ▶ Careers and programs linked to facilitate back-and-forth comparison
- ▶ Labor market data reflects local and national opportunities
- ▶ Opportunities linked to program content marketing

Montgomery College’s Senior Planning and Policy Analyst, who manages the tool on behalf of the institution, worked with EMSI to link all available noncredit and credit programs in MC’s portfolio to available positions and occupations. With this integration, tool users can explore available careers and immediately visualize program pathways that can prepare them to enter a given field, beginning with noncredit programs and continuing up through associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degree at institutions with which MC maintains articulation agreements, and even graduate study.

The EMSI Career Coach tool, available to the public on MC’s website, offers a number of valuable tools and resources to both current and prospective Montgomery College students, including high-level labor market exploration, and even a career assessment tool that students can use to connect to a career advisor at the institution, or inquire about an available program.

Supporting Exploration Increases Enrollments

By proactively supporting prospective and current student career exploration and linking career options to available programs, Montgomery College has been able to increase awareness of its credit programs, as well as its noncredit portfolio. Further, after a student has explored available professional options and scheduled an advising appointment to learn more, the quality of those appointments increases since the prospect possesses more information about the field or the program in question. Montgomery College's Senior Planning and Policy Analyst was conducting an in-depth analysis of the Career Coach tool's ROI for the institution at the time of this study's publication, but did share the preliminary findings detailed in the graphic below.

Benefits from Implementation at Montgomery College



Increase awareness of the noncredit program portfolio



Links all available programs to occupational and career fields



Improves quality of career and program advising appointments



Illustrates required educational pathway based on aspirant career position



Surfaces potential career paths for undecided prospective students

~650 users

Completed career assessments to date

\$200K

Enrollment revenue generated from the platform

10-15

Daily inquiries received through the platform

Since the EMSI Career Coach tool is able to track how many users click through the tool to the primary MC website and associated program pages, Career Coach administrators are able to measure the impact the tool has had on inquiries, applications, enrollments, and other forms of engagement such as advising appointments scheduled. To date, the tool has generated over \$200,000 in enrollment revenue from tool users who decide to enroll in an available program in order to pursue a chosen career path. Additionally, administrators receive between 10 and 15 requests for further information per day, representing a strong pipeline of latent program demand.

Reduce Risk of Career Change

The practices in this section support member efforts to educate their prospective students on new career opportunities and begin to link those opportunities to available programs. The nine questions below can support COE leaders and decision makers in assessing their current approach to understanding prospective student motivations, simplifying prospect website navigation, and developing educational career-focused content to support prospect exploration. Use the below questions to guide discussions with marketing leaders to inform and improve marketing practice.

Key Takeaway

Educate prospects on a new position or field and make the case for how the skills conferred in the program meet demonstrated labor demand to reduce the risk of career change.

Nine Questions to Educate Career Changers on Fields and Programs



Understand Motivations

- 1 What are our prospects' top 5-7 questions when they arrive at our website?
- 2 What motivates our students to pursue further education?
- 3 Does each program serve a clearly identified persona?



Simplify Navigation

- 4 Can prospects with diverse motivations quickly find relevant information?
- 5 Do navigation options align with prospects' most common questions?
- 6 Have we observed user behavior to confirm?



Create Content

- 7 Do we offer resources to help prospects research career opportunities?
- 8 Is that content advertised and easy to find?
- 9 Do program landing pages, resources, and descriptions reflect the motivations of their targeted persona?



Harness Student Value Stories

SECTION

3

- Practice 9: Action-Oriented Student Case Studies
- Practice 10: User-Generated Student Stories
- Practice 11: Social Media-Driven Outcomes Collection
- Practice 12: Real-time Student Feedback

I'll Have What She's Having

Social Proof Validates Decisions Across Industries

Once an aspiring career changer has decided on a new career path and begun to narrow program options to prepare for the change, she will seek evidence of a program's value from outside the institution or unit itself. Evidence of student and graduate satisfaction and success, from aggregate outcomes data to value stories and testimonials to reviews, help to support and bolster the decision that a prospect has begun to arrive at herself. This concept, known as social proof and applicable across industries, refers to the immense value that consumers confer to other consumers' support for a product or service. A recent study by an energy efficiency startup illustrates the enormous influence that social proof has on consumer decision making.

More Influential Than Saving Money

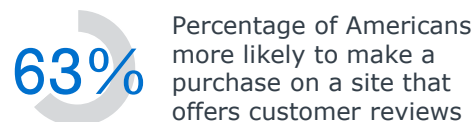
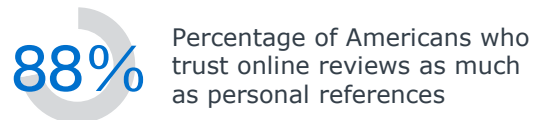
Energy Efficiency Startup Tests Different Energy Bill Delivery Messages Across Households

- 1 Save Money**
"Cut \$54/month off your utility bill"
- 2 Go Green**
"Prevent 62 pounds of greenhouse gas emission per month"
- 3 Right Thing to Do**
"Saving energy is a moral choice to protect our future"

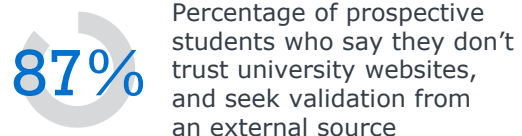
- 4 Everyone Is Doing It**
"77% of your neighbors already use a fan instead of A.C."

Resulted in a **10%** decrease in energy consumption

In Reviews We Trust...



...and Higher Ed Is No Exception



Opower, in partnership with a local utilities company, sought to lower energy expended during summer by encouraging residents in the area to use a fan instead of air conditioning. The startup developed four different messages to send to residents that emphasized different reasons to make the switch: saving money, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, making a moral choice, and because neighbors had already made the change. Surprisingly, the message related to others' behavior had the greatest positive impact.

Increasingly, social proof need not come in the form of a recommendation from a friend, colleague, or relative. In fact, a vast majority of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal references, and are more likely to make a purchase on a website that offers consumer reviews. Prospective students exhibit the same behavior, reporting low trust in university webpages and collateral, and actively seeking to validate a decision to apply or enroll from an external source.

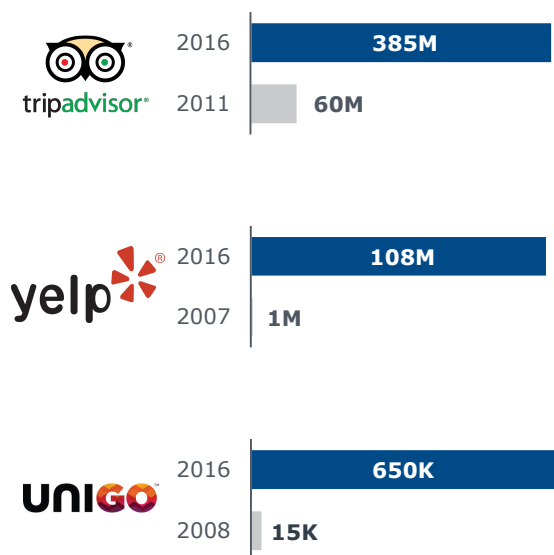
Source: "Case Studies of Achieving Energy Savings by Applying Lessons from Behavioural Sciences," Opower, March 18, 2015, <https://www.iea.org/media/workshops/2015/eeuevents/behave1103/S3Gloffreda.pdf>; "The Student Customer Journey," Learning Places, 2015, <http://www.slideshare.net/LearningPlaces/student-customer-journey>; "Local Consumer Review Survey," Bright Local, 2014, <https://www.brightlocal.com/learn/local-consumer-review-survey-2014/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

The Review Revolution

Ubiquitous Online Activity Meets Higher Education

While word-of-mouth referrals from close friends, colleagues, and family members remain a valuable currency in COE recruitment, prospective students and career changers no longer require consultation with a known and trusted contact to validate their decision making. User-generated reviews of products and services, easily available online, have become a critical resource guiding consumer choice. But while aggregated review sites have long been popular among travelers and business patrons, through websites such as Yelp and TripAdvisor, such sites have become increasingly popular in higher education as well.

Review Sites Explode in Popularity



Early Adopters in Higher Education

- First among top business schools to offer **user-generated reviews**
- Reviews **embedded on website** and solicited upon program completion
- Based on **five-star scale** with supplemental qualitative feedback

While consulting third-party review sites may be a relatively nascent behavior among prospective students, some institutions have begun to embrace and even encourage review-seeking behavior. Rather than leave reviews to third party sites such as Unigo, Niche, or Yelp, MIT Executive Education and DeVry University embed relatively unfiltered student reviews directly on their own websites, omitting only those reviews that contain offensive language or other disqualifying content. Prospective students are thus able to engage directly with other students' feedback, which the majority of prospects consider more trustworthy than institutional marketing materials.

As one COE member argued: "We cannot and should not be afraid of what our students, our customers, think about our product. Responding to our students' feedback, and modifying our offerings to meet their needs, is part of our mission, and reviews are a direct means to engage with that feedback."

Source: "Annual Reports," TripAdvisor, <http://tr.tripadvisor.com/annuals.cfm>; Fenn D, "Jordan Goldman, Founder of Unigo," Inc., <http://www.inc.com/30under30/2011/profile-jordan-goldman-founder-of-unigo.html>; Source: Tancer B, "Everyone's a Critic: Winning Customers in a Review-Driven World," Penguin Books, 2014, <http://www.penguin.com/ajax/books/excerpt/9781101621486>; DeVry University, <http://www.devry.edu/community-network/student-reviews.html>; MIT Sloan Executive Education, <http://executive.mit.edu/openenrollment/program/systematic-innovation-of-products-processes-and-services/#reviews>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Leveling the Playing Field

Increasing consumer trust in third-party reviews has begun to level the playing field for businesses across industries. Bill Tancer, a leading author on the topic of social proof, argues in a recent publication that businesses, organizations, and institutions can no longer compete effectively on the size of their marketing budgets alone. With review-writing and -seeking behavior reaching near ubiquity, consumers are much less likely to tolerate poor service, and increasingly possess the tools to filter and guide their own decision making using other consumers' experiences.

“For the first time in business history, aggregate opinions of quality can trump brand, marketing, and advertising spend. A small startup retail business, restaurant, hotel, or product manufacturer can vault above its competitors in customer acquisition simply by providing excellence. Conversely, businesses that thrived on the strength of their brand, or made up for poor service with big marketing budgets, are finding themselves in an increasingly uncompetitive position.”

*Bill Tancer, Author
"Everyone's a Critic"*

Consumers Reward Transparency

3%-5%



Increase in conversions from embedded reviews

68%

of customers trust reviews more when they see both positive *and* negative reviews

Interestingly, Tancer finds that while consumers are certainly less likely to avoid brands with dubious reputations evident in poor aggregate reviews, they are in fact more likely to patronize businesses that embed consumer reviews directly on their websites. Further, prospective consumers are more likely to trust the reviews they do see when both positive and negative reviews are documented. This behavior implies that consumers reward brands for being transparent and for actively engaging with both satisfied and dissatisfied customers. Brands that can demonstrate a responsiveness to both positive and critical feedback of their products or services can even outcompete larger and better resourced companies.

Source: Tancer B, "Everyone's a Critic: Winning Customers in a Review-Driven World," Penguin Books, 2014, <http://www.penguin.com/ajax/books/excerpt/9781101621486>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Social Proof in Recruitment Marketing

Not all Proof Is Created Equal

While user-generated reviews represent one compelling example of social proof in marketing, prospective students seek out and reward many forms of social proof, including outcomes data, testimonials, employer feedback, and influencer endorsements. However, many colleges and universities rely heavily on only one or two such forms of proof—testimonials and rankings, for example—without offering diversified evidence of their value to prospective students. Where institutions are able to capture or generate different types of content, many still struggle to effectively deliver such messages to prospective students at high-impact moments in the decision-making journey.

What Today's Prospects Are Looking for

- ✓ Are students like me successful?
- ✓ Why should I enroll in this program?
- ✓ Will this program help me achieve my goals?
- ✓ What are my next steps?



Currently Lacking on Most COE Websites

- ✗ Anecdotal and unrelatable evidence of success
- ✗ Focus on logistical, rather than emotional, decision drivers
- ✗ Lack of connection to defined student personas, priorities, and motivations
- ✗ No connection to clear and compelling call to action



Student testimonials are one form of social proof common across college and university marketing strategies, but many institutions struggle to balance a given video's applicability to universal prospective student fears and motivations, specificity to a particular program of study or credential level, and believability and authenticity. Further, many of the most well-balanced testimonial videos, readily available to prospective students, lack a clear call to action. However emotionally resonant the video may be, prospects have no outlet for their curiosity or desire to learn more, and marketers risk losing these otherwise warm leads.

The Art of Storytelling

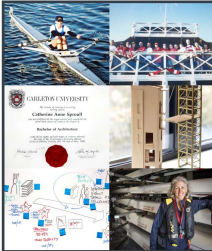

Simplified Stories Build Credibility

Testimonial videos allow a student or a graduate, rather than a marketer, to discuss their experience, and can offer compelling proof of a program’s value to prospective students. However, many testimonial videos lack a persuasive call to action, and thus fail to connect viewers to a desired next step in their decision journey. The University of British Columbia Continuing Studies (CS) division created an award-winning interactive marketing campaign titled “Continue Your Story,” centered on a series of testimonial videos that tell the personal stories of individual CS program graduates. An excerpt of one story, focused on the career changer Anne, appears below.






“See Anne’s Story”

Excerpts from a full eight-slide series



 <p>“I graduated with a degree in architecture, but soon discovered that I liked working with people better than buildings”</p>	 <p>“Our instructors were outstanding and made Agile and Scrum principles accessible”</p>	<p>“I’m now using the skills and knowledge I learned in my Agile and Scrum courses in my consultancy to create organizational change”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ See the courses Anne took ▶ Request information about our programs
---	---	---

Key Testimonial Attributes

 <p>Text- and photo-based content visually appealing, easily consumable, and relatively low cost</p>	 <p>Testimonial subjects reflect the prospective student segments that marketing hopes to attract</p>	 <p>Variety of professional and personal photos builds credibility and trust</p>	 <p>Prominent placement on homepage and enrollment pages validate prospect decision making</p>	 <p>Precise and succinct storytelling describes students’ goals and how UBC helped them achieve those</p>
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The campaign demonstrates a number of impactful features that differentiate the testimonials from other, similar content at other institutions. First, each testimonial is based on a particular type of student, from international English language learners to personal enrichment seekers to career changers, all aligned to the types of students the CS division hopes to recruit. Second, rather than pure video or text, each testimonial offers a highly personal interactive slideshow, combining video, images, and text to create an engaging experience and tell a compelling story about a relatable individual who has successfully completed a program within the CS portfolio. Third, at the conclusion of each testimonial, viewers are prompted to either view the program the testimonial subject completed, or else explore the larger portfolio of programs, ensuring that viewers may easily navigate directly to a program and apply, enroll, or request further information.

Sourcing Stories at Scale

Solicitations from Students Provide Authentic Content

While testimonial videos offer marketers an opportunity to control the narrative about their institutions and its programs, prospective students who desire an authentic portrayal of student experiences in the program are often skeptical of such polished, high production campaigns. User-generated content, or marketing collateral submitted by current and former customers, represents one approach to gathering more authentic types of content at scale. To capitalize on prospect desires for authentic student stories, Colorado State University-Global Campus developed its “Already on Campus” campaign to solicit and showcase user-generated testimonial content.

“Already on Campus” Campaign Illustrates Diverse Student Body

Colorado State University GLOBAL CAMPUS

Where's Your Campus?

Share photos of "your campus" with us! These can be photos of your family, best pals, furry friends, home, favorite activities, anything that fills your daily life.

[Share my campus](#)

Brittney D.

I love my CSU-Global 'campus' aka typically late nights and weekends in our apartment. Yes, I complete school work during the Super Bowl! My research study essentials include: organization, colorful p...[More](#)

Implementation Details

- Stories solicited via Facebook posts to current students
- Students prompted to provide up to five photos of "their campus" with text description
- Plans to create communities and chat groups by geography and academic interest area

Benefits

- ▶ **100 stories** submitted per month
- ▶ Provide authentic insight into **"students like me"**
- ▶ Appeals to both **current and prospective** students

Since CSU-Global Campus is a completely online institution, the campaign seeks to illustrate the myriad circumstances, locations, and life stages of its students. The marketing team sought to collect stories directly from current students, prompting them in their own words to capture "their campus" in photos and text, and submit those stories through social media to a map platform hosted on a microsite. At its peak, the social media campaign received approximately 100 submissions from current students per month. Submitted content is almost entirely unfiltered—CSU-Global Campus staff screen for offensive or irrelevant submissions—and visitors to the microsite may click into individual submissions to read, view, and learn more about how current students across the world balance their work and life with the demands of online education.

CSU-Global Campus currently plans to update and improve the platform's utility for both prospective and current students by allowing users to filter stories by major and other demographic information, and adding a chat functionality to enable users to communicate with one another.

Source: "You're Already on Campus," Colorado State University-Global Campus, <http://alreadyoncampus.com/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Outcomes Marketing at a Campus Near You

American University Microsite Boasts a Wealth of Outcomes Data

Many institutions seek to demonstrate the value of their programs using survey data collected from recent graduates, but many such efforts fall short of response rate expectations. One notably successful effort comes from American University's "We Know Success" campaign, which comprises a multichannel marketing campaign centered on a outcomes data visualization engine hosted on a microsite. The website interface, mocked up below, allows users to filter by degree level, major, and college to view quantitative outcomes related to placement data, industry of employment, earnings, and even employer.

For AU **Undergraduates** with a degree in **History** in the **College of Arts and Sciences**

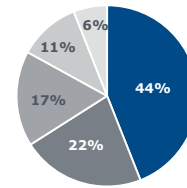
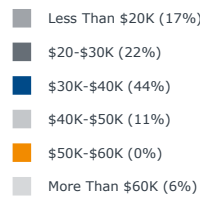
Not just basic outcomes...

92%

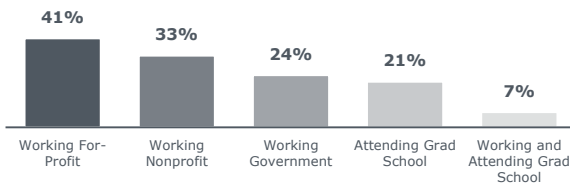
Working, grad school, or both



..and how much they make...



...but where they went...



Employers

Grad Schools

...and what they did to get there

74% Participated in an **internship**

Top Internships For Credit

- National Museum of American History
- US Department of State
- US Holocaust Memorial Museum
- American University
- Bonhams Auction House

► **More**

53% Took advantage of **study abroad**

Top Study Abroad Locations

- United Kingdom
- Spain
- China
- Belgium
- Chile

► **View Map**

The campaign represents an institution-wide data collection effort coordinated through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Career Center, and the marketing team. Though the effort received presidential support that few institutions can easily duplicate, the data collection effort employs numerous strategies, illustrated on the following page, that COE Forum members can adapt for their own purposes.

Please see the "Outcomes Marketing Self-Audit" tool on page 68 of this publication for further guidance.

1) Results based on Graduation Census as of six months after graduation.

Source: American University, "We Know Success," www.american.edu/weknowsuccess; EAB interviews and analysis.

Outcomes Collection Begins at Enrollment

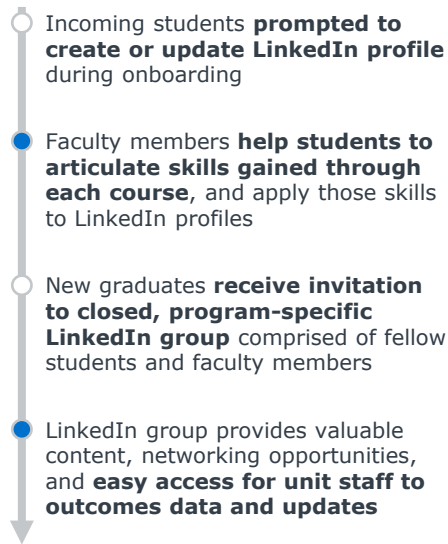
Adopting Social Media for Professional Purposes Represents Win-Win

American University’s approach to collecting graduate outcomes data for a given class year, illustrated on the left side of the page below, represents a coordinated effort over the course of approximately one year. While simple survey distribution over email garners an impressive 50% response rate, the team’s use of social media and online research, coupled with personalized individual follow-up, help increase the effort’s total response rate to approximately 80%. Marketing staff search LinkedIn profiles and other public sources for evidence of a graduate outcome, and reach out directly either themselves or through a university contact personally connected to the graduate to confirm.

AU Uses Supplemental Research to Achieve Enviably Response Rate



For COE, Outcomes Collection can Begin at Enrollment



Though most COE units lack the staff capacity, access to cross-campus resources, and institutional buy-in to orchestrate a data collection effort comparable to American University’s scale, program-level efforts such as the hypothetical process illustrated on the right side of the page above might garner similarly impressive results on a smaller scale. Instructors and program leads could prompt all incoming students to create a LinkedIn account if they do not already possess one, and make an effort to translate the skills conferred throughout the class into language a student could include on that platform. Recent graduates could join a closed LinkedIn group, where instructors and marketing staff could monitor professional updates, collect value stories, provide valuable content, and promote additional related program offerings.

Expanding the Definition of “Outcomes”

Though graduate outcomes surveys and the high-level quantitative data those provide can represent concrete evidence of a program’s practical career value, such data are exceedingly challenging to collect. Without developing and distributing surveys to graduates, institutions can still demonstrate the value of their programs in many different ways. Two examples, illustrated below, illustrate creative metrics that institutions have used as “proof” of their programs’ value.

KU Edwards Campus Redefines “ROI” with Creative Metrics

Results of a Survey of ~2,000 Current Students

89% say they’ve acquired knowledge they wouldn’t have learned through their current job

8/10 say they’ve gained opportunities for career advancement

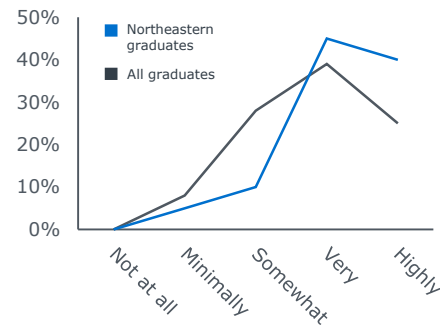
82% say they’ve expanded their professional network

- Self-reported beliefs about program value capture authentic student sentiment
- Survey also captures beliefs about increased “marketability” and earning potential
- Survey distributed to current students boosts response rate

Northeastern University Lets the Job Market Speak for Itself

Illustrative Results of Northeastern Employer Survey

How prepared are recent graduates to succeed in your workplace?*



64% Rate **recent graduates** either very or highly prepared

86% Rate **Northeastern graduates** either very or highly prepared

- Survey of 1,001 employers in 25 industries across the U.S.
- Survey covers many professional attributes, including creativity, initiative, and leadership
- Microsite also includes job placement data and co-op program participation rates

The University of Kansas Edwards Campus conducts an annual survey of its own students, asking respondents to self-report the value they believe their program of study has conferred to their career and professional trajectory. Surveying current students ensures a higher response rate than most graduate surveys, while self-reported measures of value nonetheless confer social proof to other aspects of KU Edwards Campus’ marketing strategy.

Northeastern University uses its large network of employer partners to collect demand-side value stories related to the employability and desirability of Northeastern graduates. Surveying over 1,000 employer partners, Northeastern asks respondents to rate all of their recent college graduate hires across a number of professional competencies, and then asks about Northeastern graduates specifically. Favorable comparisons of Northeastern graduates to other graduates helps to reinforce Northeastern’s career-focused value proposition.

Source: <http://www.northeastern.edu/preparedness/>; <https://edwardscampus.ku.edu/return-investment>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Online Reputation Management

Post-purchase Experiences Drive Word of Mouth

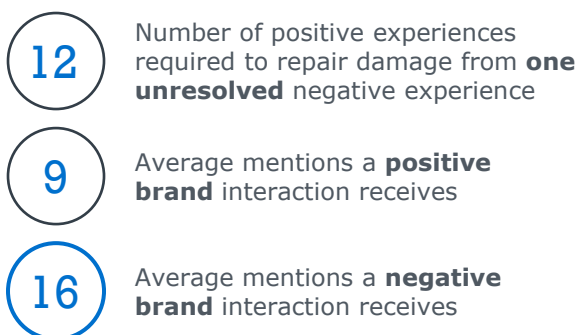
Although enrolling a qualified student certainly represents a marketing success, a student's experience with the institution and the program only begins with its marketing materials. Progressive marketers understand that an institution's brand value is predicated on satisfied, successful students and graduates, many of whom may refer friends, family, and colleagues to other available programs. Students pleased with their experience represent a valuable marketing asset, while displeased students represent a considerable liability.

If Left Unresolved...

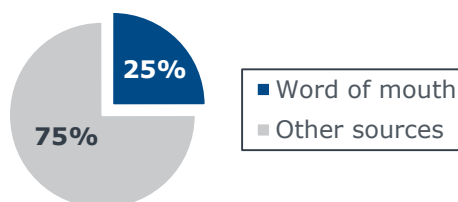
High-Priority, Low-Satisfaction Factors for Adult Learners

- 1 Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment
- 2 I am able to register for classes with few conflicts
- 3 Faculty provide timely feedback
- 4 Adequate financial aid is available
- 5 I seldom get the run around when seeking information

...Negative Experiences Drive Brand Detractors...



...And Impact Top Referral Source



The list on the left side of the page, above, illustrates the results of a survey of adult students that asked respondents to both rate the most important aspects of the COE experience to them, as well as those aspects with which they were the least satisfied. Administrators can expect these high-priority, low-satisfaction factors to generate the greatest amount of negative feedback among their students, and COE leaders must develop systems to provide timely support to aggrieved students.

Additionally, negative brand experiences receive roughly twice as many in-person and online mentions, on average, as positive brand experiences. That means that, though the majority of COE graduates may be satisfied and successful, the few that are not are much more likely to complain to their friends, colleagues, and families about the experience.

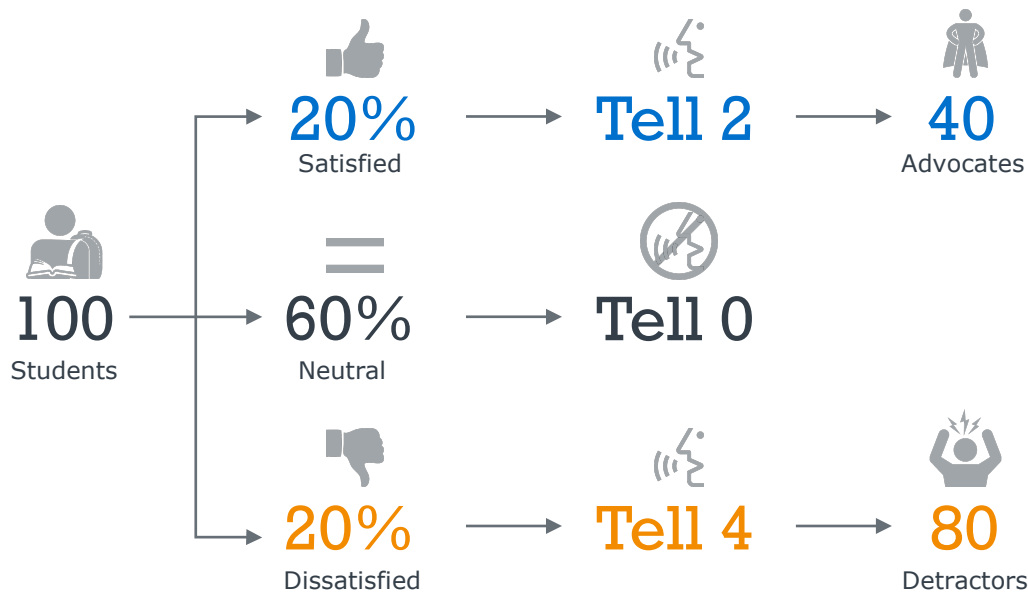
Source: Newman D, "Customer Experience Is the Future of Marketing," *Forbes*, October 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2015/10/13/customer-experience-is-the-future-of-marketing/#44ec35fe4b21>;
"Good Service Is Good Business: American Consumers Willing to Spend More With Companies That Get Service Right, According to American Express Survey," American Express, May 2011, <http://about.americanexpress.com/news/pr/2011/csbar.aspx>;
"2014-15 National Adult Student Priorities Report," Ruffalo Noel Levitz; EAB interviews and analysis.

Imagine the Impact of Detractors

News of Bad Service Travels Twice as Far

While the majority of COE program graduates likely value their experience and would recommend the program to a friend or colleague if prompted, consumer research explored on the previous page suggests that dissatisfied graduates are almost twice as likely as satisfied graduates to share their experience with others. The illustrative example below demonstrates the marketing hazard that even a small number of dissatisfied graduates represent.

Illustrative Program Outcomes



“ The fastest way to turn someone against you is to get a complaint and not respond, especially now that students have a public platform online. Social media is modern day word of mouth.”

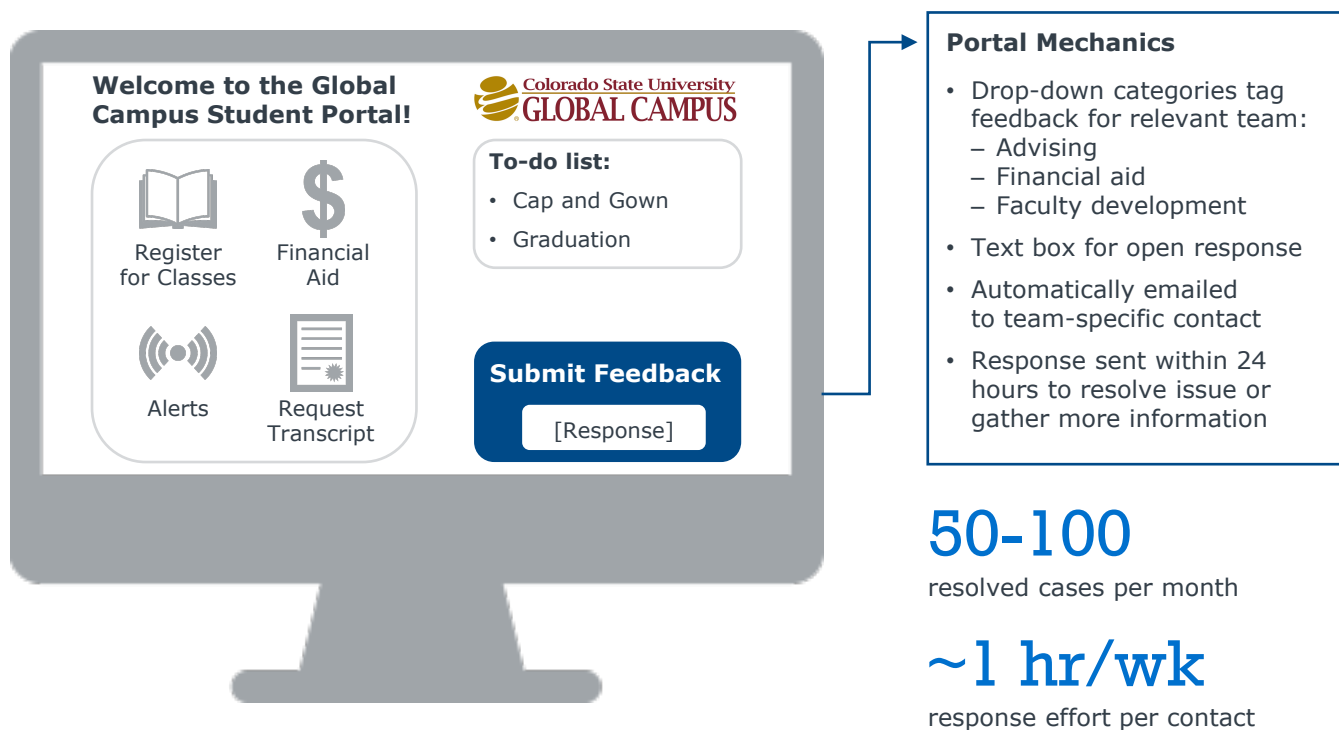
*Assistant Director of Online Education
Large, Midwestern Public University*

Though positive student feedback provides important evidence of the alignment of curriculum, support services, and technological tools with students' needs, given limited staff and faculty resources on campus administrators should prioritize responding to negative student feedback and solving problems as they arise. Once a student has become dissatisfied, and fails to receive timely support, she may take to public forums such as social media or review sites to air her grievance. At that point, an institution must attempt to mitigate the damage done from what could have been a preventable event, and risks losing future students in the process.

Multiple Opportunities to Resolve Issues

Integrating Feedback into Student Portal

Colleges and universities recognize the importance of monitoring student satisfaction, and many institutions distribute student satisfaction and sentiment surveys semesterly, annually, or biannually. However, such data collection efforts offer at best a retroactive analysis of student sentiment, and do not allow administrators to respond to specific issues while they are still timely for a student. Recognizing the importance of surfacing and responding to both positive and, especially, negative student feedback in real time, CSU-Global Campus has embedded an open-response feedback form into its online student portal, empowering students to quickly and easily submit questions, concerns, praise, and complaints.



The screenshot shows the Colorado State University Global Campus Student Portal. The main content area includes a 'Welcome to the Global Campus Student Portal!' message, a 'To-do list' with items like 'Cap and Gown' and 'Graduation', and a 'Submit Feedback' button with a '[Response]' text box. A callout box titled 'Portal Mechanics' lists the following details:

- Drop-down categories tag feedback for relevant team:
 - Advising
 - Financial aid
 - Faculty development
- Text box for open response
- Automatically emailed to team-specific contact
- Response sent within 24 hours to resolve issue or gather more information

Below the callout box, the text indicates that 50-100 cases are resolved per month, with a response effort of approximately 1 hour per week per contact.

A student using the form selects the administrative or academic topic area—including advising, financial aid, or faculty development—most relevant to her feedback and fills out an open response text box. CSU-Global has designated single points of contact for each topic area, who instantly receive feedback tagged to their area as an email. Points of contact report that they receive and resolve between 50 and 100 pieces of feedback every month, amounting to approximately one hour per week of effort. In return for this relatively small investment of staff time, the institution is able to support potentially hundreds of dissatisfied students every month before those students become disgruntled and decide to tell their social networks about the experience.

Harness Student Value Stories

The practices in this section support member efforts to harness student value stories and creative forms of outcomes data to provide proof of program value and accelerate prospective student decision making towards application and enrollment. The nine questions below can support COE leaders and decision makers in assessing their current approach to creating authentic and emotionally resonant content, delivering content at the right moments in the prospective student journey to inflect decision making, and monitoring student sentiment and experience to mitigate brand detractors and promote brand advocates. Use the below questions to guide discussions with marketing leaders to inform and improve marketing practice.

Key Takeaway

Provide proof of program value by sharing student value stories to demonstrate authentic, relatable outcomes that connect to defined student personas as prospects independently build and prioritize their consideration set.

Nine Questions to Validate Prospect Enrollment Decisions



Aim for Authenticity

1 Does social proof content foster an emotional connection?

2 Are reviews and testimonials believable and relatable to students we serve?

3 Does content include photos and/or other multimedia material?



Deliver at High-Impact Moments

4 Does positive social proof appear prominently on program pages?

5 Are we employing those messages close to the enrollment decision point?

6 Does each program serve a clearly identified persona?



Monitor Student Experience

7 Do we have insight into our students' pain points?

8 Are students reviewing our programs on social media?

9 Are we actively monitoring our online brand?



Outcomes Marketing Toolkit

Demonstrating Program ROI to Career Changers

SECTION

4

- Outcomes Marketing Self-Audit
- Program-to-Career Mapping Guide
- Affinity Group Partnership Guide
- Non-working Marketing Spend Business Case
- Misrepresentation Rule Briefing Sheet
- Social Media Marketing Channel Primer

Tool 1: Outcomes Marketing Self-Audit

Tool Overview

Increasing public scrutiny of the value of higher education, skeptical students, and large student debt burdens have made it essential for colleges and universities to provide evidence of their programs' demonstrated outcomes to prospective students. However, most institutions and units continue to emphasize logistical program information over evidence of a program's professional value. While logistical information, particularly price and curricula, are clearly important data points to inform prospect decision making, prospective students now expect information about career outcomes. Progressive institutions have begun to use outcomes marketing in their advertisements, program pages, and unit or institutional homepages to inform prospective students about the career value of returning to school.



What is Outcomes Marketing?

The COE Forum defines outcomes marketing as campaigns and messages that provide evidence to prospective students about the tangible career benefits of a program. This evidence includes:

- Labor market demand that demonstrates opportunities in a field of study, such as:
 - Available job openings
 - Expected job growth
 - Average earnings by position
- Success and validation of graduates, such as:
 - Student testimonials
 - Quantitative placement data
 - Ratings and reviews
 - Program rankings

Using the Tool:

Use this tool to audit your current program advertisements, program webpages, and unit or institutional homepage to ensure that you are communicating program outcomes clearly.

Each page includes a checklist of important content items to include, and program advertisements, program pages, and other web pages should include a majority of the checklist items.

Each checklist is accompanied by an example of effective advertisements, program pages, or unit homepages to illustrate what it looks like to put outcomes marketing into practice.

Outcomes Marketing Messaging Checklist

Checklist of High-Impact Outcomes Marketing Materials to Include

Advertisements on social media, search engines, and even print media represent the first experience that many prospective students have with your program(s), and the stakes are high for units to make a compelling first impression. Since prospective students have become increasingly skeptical of direct enrollment solicitations, effective program advertisements prioritize professional outcomes instead.

Use the checklist below to ensure that your advertisements effectively capture prospective student attention and provide valuable content beyond program logistics, then review the example from Seton Hall University School of Law for ideas about how to incorporate outcomes marketing into advertisements.¹

Outcomes Marketing in Program and Unit Advertising

Does Your Advertising Content Include the Following?	Yes	No
Career outcomes (e.g., titles, occupations, employers, industries) related to the program		
Mean or median earnings associated with relevant career outcomes		
Labor market trends (e.g., total number of related job openings, expected growth in total job openings) related to the program		
Interesting and relevant information not explicitly linked to the academic program		
A clear "WIIFM" ("What's in it for me?") appeal for students not explicitly interested in enrolling in a program		
Content aligned to prospects' in-the-moment browsing behavior and mindset (e.g., entertaining content on Facebook, professional content on LinkedIn)		
Empathetic, second-person language (e.g., "Learn how you can take advantage of this growing field")		
A clear sense of urgency or opportunity (e.g., "500 jobs openings in your city, are you prepared?")		
A call to action that is not explicitly enrollment or application related		

Seton Hall University School of Law Example LinkedIn Sponsored Post



1) For additional information about Seton Hall University School of Law's use of labor market data in program advertisements, please see pages 33-34 of this publication.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Outcomes Marketing Web Presence Checklist

Checklist of High-Impact Outcomes Marketing Materials to Include

Once you have successfully captured a prospective student’s attention with your advertising and encouraged them to learn more about your program offerings on your website, you must solidify the link between your available programs and relevant professional opportunities. Use the checklist below to ensure that program webpages provide compelling evidence of a program’s professional value to prospective students, and then review the outcomes-focused program webpage template for inspiration.¹

Outcomes Marketing on Program Pages

Do Your Program Webpages Include the Following?	Yes	No
Career outcomes (e.g., titles, occupations, employers, industries) related to the program		
Labor market trends (e.g., total number of related job openings, expected growth in total job openings) related to the program		
Direct connection between courses and professional skills attained		
Testimonial content and endorsements from current students and graduates affiliated with the program		
Quantitative placement data (e.g., job placement rate, promotion rate, career change rate)		
Third-party data validating the program’s value (e.g., rankings, awards)		
Reviews of your institution, unit, program, or course		
Content generated by current or former students (e.g., photo submissions, unfiltered program feedback)		

Hypothetical Program Page Template

[PROGRAM NAME]

Program Facts at a Glance	
Curriculum	Learning Outcomes
Cost	Credit Transfer
Modality/Format	Related Programs
Credits Conferred/Time to Completion	Request Information/Apply now

Graduate Employment and Earnings Data:

92%
Working, grad school, or both

1% Other
7% Seeking Employment

Career Outlook:

- 150,000** related job openings nationally
- 55%** expected growth in job openings through 2024
- In-Demand Skills:**
 - Communication
 - Software Design
 - User Experience
- Top Employers**
 - Deloitte
 - Alliant Health Solutions
 - Google

1) For additional examples of outcomes marketing on program or unit webpages, please review pages 60-62 of this publication

Source: American University, "We Know Success," www.american.edu/weknowsuccess; EAB interviews and analysis.

Web Presence Student Centricity Checklist

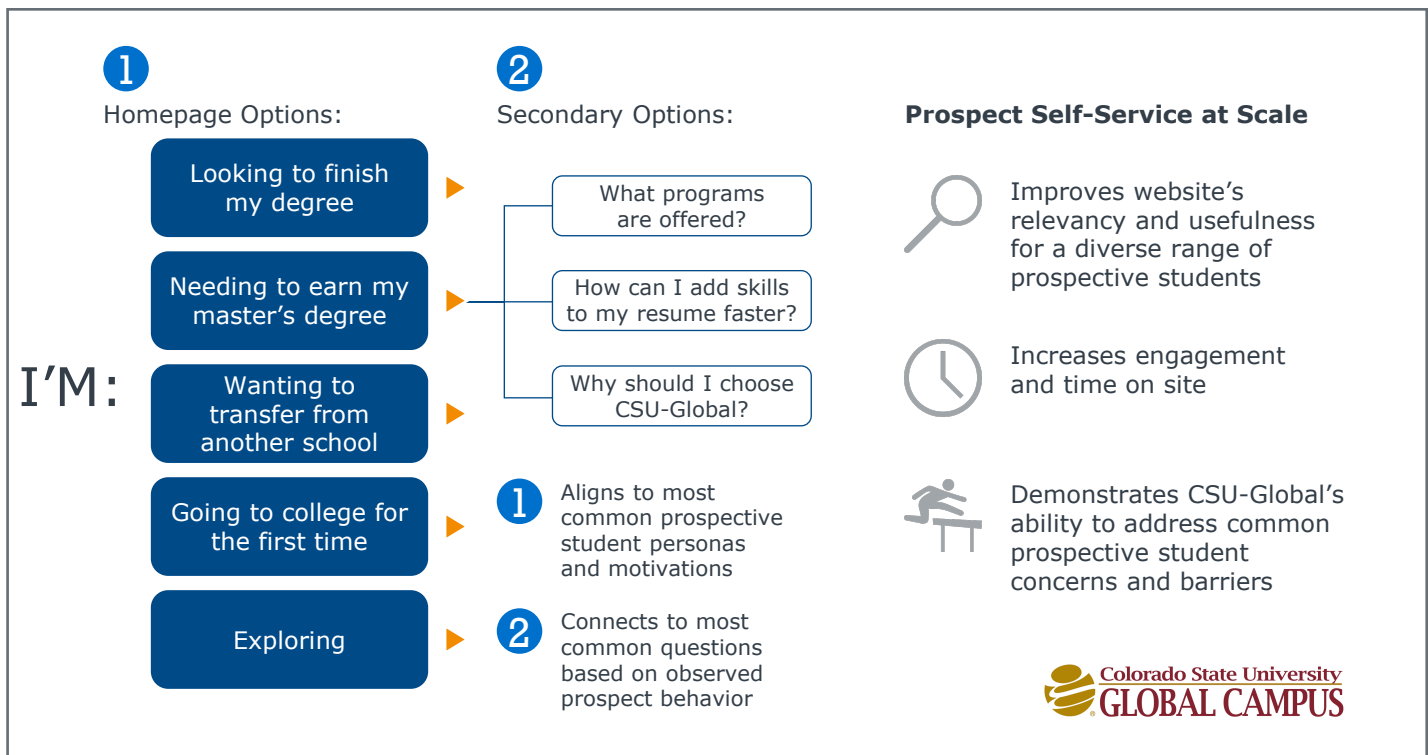
Checklist of High-Impact Outcomes Marketing Materials to Include

A unit's website home page is an indispensable resource for prospective students interested in learning more about how further education can help prepare them to achieve their professional goals, and progressive institutions and units have begun to optimize their website designs towards prospective student information needs, hoping to help prospects navigate as quickly as possible to the information most relevant to them. Use the below checklist to ensure that your website design is optimized to address prospective student questions, concerns, and motivations, rather than institutional capabilities. Finally, review the simplified illustration of Colorado State University Global Campus's institutional homepage for one example of student-centric website design.¹

Overall Website Usability and Student Centricity

Does Your Website Include the Following?	Yes	No
Information architecture that prioritizes answers to common prospective student questions (e.g., "what programs are available," "what support services are available," "can I transfer credits?")		
Navigational language that reflects the prospective student voice, rather than institutional voice (e.g., "what programs are available?" versus "academic offerings")		
Information and navigational options for visitors unsure whether they plan to return to school		
Intuitive navigation that allows visitors to easily move between program pages		
Features (e.g., program explorer, program or career assessment) that help prospective students determine which program(s) is the best fit for their personal and professional needs		

Colorado State University Global Campus Example



1) For another example of a student-centric website design, please review the University of Colorado at Boulder's Continuing Education website, profiled on pages 44-46 of this publication.

Source: Colorado State University Global Campus, <https://csuglobal.edu/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 2: Program-to-Career Mapping Guide

Tool Overview

While institutions and units understand the need to connect their program offerings to labor market opportunities, often these connections are not transparent or readily available for prospective students. Further, many program pages emphasize course and program learning outcomes over career value, and marketing messages focus on program availability rather than professional application.

Progressive COE units incorporate labor market data from sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) or Burning Glass Technologies Labor/Insight™ into their program development, planning, marketing, and recruiting efforts. Using labor market data to connect program offerings to local and national professional opportunities represents the critical first step to educating prospective students about the career value they can expect from given programs, and equips both marketers and recruiters to make an outcomes-based case for enrollment based on professional interest.

What Is Labor Market Data?

Labor market data refers to information about the employment trends of a given market (e.g., city, region, industry, employer), typically related to the hiring needs of employers within that market. Labor market data typically takes two forms: structural and real-time.



Structural

Structural labor market data sources such as the BLS rely on surveys and other instruments that collect data periodically. These sources analyze currently held positions, projected employment trends in a given field, conditions within a given field, and other variables. For example, this could include an annual survey of the accounting occupation that includes the total number of account positions held nationwide, skills required for the position, typical tasks, average earnings, and projected growth in available positions through 2024. These data are publically available.



Real-Time

Real-time labor market data sources use web crawling technology to analyze job postings data and other employer hiring data, and typically collect data daily if not multiple times per day. These sources provide real-time data related to current hiring needs in a given market, which can include the total number of available job openings in a given field, top hiring employers, skills required to fill open positions, and trends by geography. These data are typically proprietary.

How to Use This Tool

This tool provides step-by-step guidance to integrate labor market data into marketing and recruiting efforts.

Part 1: Labor Market Data Primer. Review common labor market data points, how to use those data in marketing and recruiting, and common formats for deploying those data.

Part 2: Program-to-Career Crosswalk Guide. Brainstorm and identify potential career outcomes for which a program graduate will be best positioned and prepared, and link existing programs to quantitative labor market data related to those career prospects.

Part 3: Labor Market Data Marketing Taxonomy. Examine how other institutions have used labor market data in their marketing and recruiting efforts, from quick-wins to more involved examples:

- Text and numerical data in program descriptions
- Data visualizations
- Integrated program sheets that combine multiple types and formats of labor market data
- Interactive website features that enable prospective students to explore the data on their own

Part 1: Labor Market Data Primer

Type of Data, Effective Uses, and Common Formats

The following pages enumerate common forms of labor market and employer demand data that colleges and universities can use in their marketing efforts to demonstrate the career value and professional ROI of their programs to prospective students. Each type of data includes a brief description, advice on how and when to use the data, the best stage in the recruitment funnel to deploy the data, and common formats for delivery.

Data Type and Description

How to Use

Common Formats

Total Job Openings

The total number of open positions in a given field, or that require a certain skill or skill set

- Cite total job openings to size the potential opportunity and create urgency for prospective career changers
- Use in top-of-the-funnel lead generation and awareness materials to capture prospect attention

- Infographic-style numbers
- Integrated in narrative text
- Line or bar charts

Historical and Projected Job Growth

The change in total available job openings over time, and the anticipated number of job openings for a given position or field, or for positions that require a certain skill or skill set

- Provide hiring trends over time, or the projected change in total number of open positions to provide evidence that changing careers can provide long-term job stability
- Use in top-of-the-funnel lead generation and awareness materials to capture prospect attention

- Infographic-style numbers
- Integrated in narrative text
- Line or bar charts

Top Titles or Occupations

The names of available positions that most frequently require applicants with the skills or experience conferred through your program

- Offer open positions related to a program of study to provide evidence of the program's professional value and the likelihood that a student will secure employment post-graduation
- Use on program information pages and related collateral, and in middle-of-the-funnel nurturing interactions

- In-depth career profiles
- Bar charts
- Text-based lists

In-Demand Skills

The top skills required to pursue a given position or career

- Showcase employer-demanded skills to demonstrate the career value of a program when that program's curriculum aligns with those skills
- Use on program information pages and related collateral, and in middle-of-the-funnel nurturing interactions

- Bar charts and other forms of data visualization
- Text-based lists

Labor Market Data Primer (cont.)

Data Type and Description

How to Use

Common Formats

Top Industries or Employers

The industries and employers posting the greatest number of open positions for applicants with the skills or experience conferred through your program

- Offer information related to the types of employing organizations seeking candidates similar to program graduates to provide evidence of student job prospects post-graduation
- Use on program information pages and in middle-of-the-funnel lead nurturing interactions

- Employer or industry profiles
- Integrated in narrative text
- Text-based lists
- Bar charts

Geographic Demand "Hotspots"

Geographic areas (e.g., cities, MSAs, states, regions) with large number of employers that require professionals with the skills or experience conferred through your program

- Provide employer demand by geographic area to offer evidence to prospective students that positions are available near them, indicating immediate opportunity
- Use in top-of-the-funnel lead generation and awareness-building efforts to capture prospective student attention

- Maps
- Bar charts and other data visualizations

Salary or Earnings

The mean or median earnings associated with a given position

- Provide mean or median earnings to offer a natural incentive for prospective students to consider a career change, particularly if those earnings are above average
- Use in top-of-the-funnel lead generation and awareness-building efforts to capture prospective student attention

- Infographic-style numbers
- Integrated in narrative text
- Tabular or text-based lists
- Bar charts and other data visualizations

Part 2: Program-to-Career Crosswalk Guide

Using BLS Data to Demonstrate Labor Market Demand for Existing Programs

This step-by-step process shows how to link a single existing program to labor market demand using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' O*NET code occupational classification system.

1 Identify Relevant Career Outcomes Related to the Program in Question

- Confer with faculty and staff involved in the program to brainstorm relevant professional outcomes for which program graduates would be best prepared.
- Reach out to current students and especially alumni to ascertain current or expected professional outcomes following graduation from the program.
- Develop a list of one or more relevant occupational outcomes; these can be broad umbrella categories (e.g., scientists) or more specific examples (e.g., bioengineering researcher).
- Write all potential career outcomes into the "Related Career Opportunities" box in the below table.

Program Information	
Program Title	
Degree Level	
Modality	
Related Career Opportunities	

2 Search for O*NET Occupation Codes Related to Identified Career Outcomes

- Visit O*NET Online (www.onetonline.org).
- Type a position, occupation, or career identified in step one of this exercise into the search bar.
- Click the arrow or press "enter" on your keyboard to advance to the search results page.

The screenshot shows the O*NET Online homepage. At the top, there is a search bar labeled "Occupation Quick Search:" with the word "accountant" entered. Below the search bar are navigation links: "Help", "Find Occupations", "Advanced Search", "Crosswalks", "Share", and "O*NET Sites". The main content area includes a large banner with a construction crane and the text "Build your future with O*NET OnLine." Below this is a "What is O*NET?" button. To the right, there are sections for "What's New?", "I want to be a...", "ATTN: VETERANS", and "Hot Technologies". At the bottom, there are three main navigation panels: "Find Occupations" with a "Browse" dropdown set to "Bright Outlook", "Crosswalks" with a "Browse by O*NET Data:" dropdown, and "Apprenticeship" with a dropdown.

Type a keyword related to the professional application of this program into the search bar (e.g., "accountant" for an accounting program)

Program-to-Career Crosswalk Guide (cont.)

3 Select O*NET Occupation Codes Related to Identified Career Outcomes

- Review the O*NET occupations listed on the search results page and select the occupation most closely related to the program’s identified career outcomes.
- Input the occupation code, occupation title, and justification (if the code’s relevance to the program in question is not self-evident) in the below table.

Occupation Quick Search:

Help Find Occupations Advanced Search Crosswalks Share O*NET Sites

Quick Search for:
accountant

Showing top 20 occupations for **accountant**. Closest matches are shown first.

How do they match?	Code	Occupation
	13-2011.01	Accountants ★ Bright Outlook
	13-2011.00	Accountants and Auditors ★
	43-3031.00	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks ★
	13-2031.00	Budget Analysts
	43-3021.02	Billing, Cost, and Rate Clerks ★
	13-2061.00	Financial Examiners
	43-3051.00	Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks
	13-1041.02	Licensing Examiners and Inspectors
	13-2082.00	Tax Preparers
	43-1011.00	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers ★
	13-2011.02	Auditors ★
	43-3021.01	Statement Clerks ★
	43-3011.00	Bill and Account Collectors
	43-3021.00	Billing and Posting Clerks ★
	13-2081.00	Tax Examiners and Collectors, and Revenue Agents
	43-4141.00	New Accounts Clerks
	11-3031.02	Financial Managers, Branch or Department ★
	43-4071.00	File Clerks
	13-1021.00	Buyers and Purchasing Agents, Farm Products ✔ Green
	13-2051.00	Financial Analysts ✔

Occupations 1-20 of 165 shown: [Show all occupations](#)

O*NET Code Identification

Identify at least one O*NET code for the program in question, based on the one or more occupations that program graduates are most likely to secure. While many programs (e.g., Accounting) will connect clearly to available O*NET codes, others (e.g., Applied Social Research, Gerontology) may not. For programs without obvious related O*NET codes, include the most relevant available code with a justification for your choice in the far right column.

Related O*NET Occupational Code(s)	O*NET Occupational Title	Justification (if not clearly apparent)

Program-to-Career Crosswalk Guide (cont.)

4 Collect Labor Market Data for each O*NET Occupation Code

- Scroll to the bottom of the O*NET occupational information page to view the related labor market data points.
- Input "Employment," "Projected growth," "Projected job openings," and "Median wages" in the below table.
- Return to step three and select another relevant O*NET code if one exists.
- Repeat steps two through four for each occupational outcome related to the program in question.



Scroll to the bottom of the following page to identify and catalog the O*NET occupational code's associated labor market data

BLS Data Collection

For each identified O*NET occupation, include the appropriate data point in the columns that proceed to the right. If multiple O*NET codes are applicable to the program in question, include each additional code and related data points in a subsequent row.

Occupation (O*NET Code)	Employment (2014)	Projected Growth (2014-2024)	Rate of Growth	Projected Job Openings (2014-2024)	Median Wages (2015)

Source: O*NET, <https://www.onetonline.org/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Part 3: Labor Market Data Marketing Taxonomy

Example 1: Text and Tabular Data

Highlighting employer demand and labor market data using a narrative text format is a simple, familiar, and straightforward method to communicate the career prospects associated with a given program to prospective students. Unfortunately, given today's prospective student's information consumption habits, short attention span, and high expectations for entertainment value, text-based reporting is typically less effective in lead-generating activities such as display ads. However, on program information pages, delivering labor market data using narrative text or tabular data helps prospects who have already demonstrated interest in your program to quickly and easily consume large amounts of outcomes information related to the program.



American University Deploys Earnings and Jobs Data to Highlight Programs' Professional Value

This degree can prepare you for the more than 27,000 positions requiring data evaluation or program evaluation skills¹ that were posted in 2015 alone. In addition, social science positions in the D.C. area are projected to grow by 29 percent from 2010 to 2020, and 19 percent nationwide.² Among the positions this degree prepares you for are a variety of lucrative analyst and management roles:

- Management Analyst – \$81,320
- Operations Research Analyst – \$78,630
- Top Executives – \$102,690

-Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016 Occupational Outlook Handbook

- Incorporates numerous labor market data points in its program descriptions, sourced from the BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Uses total open positions requiring the skills conferred in its program and projected growth in related position through 2020 to size the career opportunity for prospects and cultivate a sense of urgency to enroll and take advantage of these favorable hiring conditions
- Deploys top titles and earnings data to offer concrete examples of possible career outcomes following program graduation, and to emphasize the tangible financial opportunity associated with enrollment

By 2024, nearly 2.5 million new healthcare jobs will be created in the U.S.¹

- Uses differentiated text, font size, and color to draw prospective students' attention
- Highlights the substantial size of the health care job market, and forecasts for its growth to create a sense of urgency



Rasmussen College Offers Transparency by Breaking Out Earnings by Percentile

How Much Could You Earn as a Criminal Justice Professional?

In-Demand Career Options for Your Future

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), earning a degree, regardless of the field of study, can improve income potential.* Here is the average salary by percentile and projected job growth for criminal justice professionals:

Job Title(s)	10th Percentile	25th Percentile	50th Percentile	Job Growth (By Year 2024)
First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	\$48,930	\$63,050	\$82,090	4%
First-Line Supervisors of Correctional Officers	\$38,030	\$44,020	\$59,720	3%
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	\$33,430	\$42,910	\$58,320	5%

- Employs a tabular data presentation format to illustrate the earning potential associated with various criminal justice professions
- Rasmussen uses BLS data to highlight earnings across various percentiles of criminal justice professionals, clearly illustrating median expected earnings, as well as projected job growth through 2024
- Such information clearly communicates the financial opportunity for prospective students, and facilitates further conversations with enrollment staff about the career value of Rasmussen's programs

Source: American University, "Online Master's in Healthcare Management," http://programs.online.american.edu/mshcm/masters-in-healthcare-management?_ga=1.249914176.79495945.1489096431; American University, "Online MS in Measurement and Evaluation," http://programs.online.american.edu/msme/masters-in-measurement-and-evaluation?_ga=1.249914176.79495945.1489096431; Rasmussen College, "Help Advance Your Criminal Justice Career," <http://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/justice-studies/criminal-justice/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Labor Market Data Marketing Taxonomy (cont.)

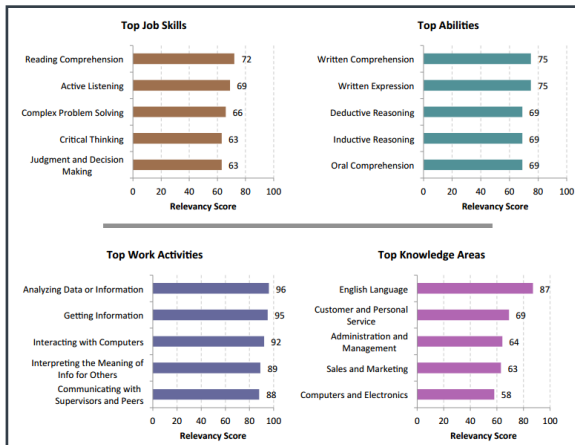
Example 2: Data Charts

Bar charts, pie charts, heat maps, and other forms of data visualization are an engaging format to communicate labor market and employer demand data to prospective students. These formats can be used to quickly order and prioritize information for prospects, and to size career opportunities (e.g., total number of jobs requiring the skills conferred in the program, top employers hiring candidates with the skills conferred in the program). Further, data visualizations represent an eye-catching element to include in advertisements and lead generation campaigns, and can add color to program pages.

Elements of Effective Data Visualization

- Communicates a clear point or argument
- Minimizes complexity by visualizing only as many variables at a time as necessary
- Uses intentional colors, as few as possible
- Employs informative titling and call-outs

UCI University of California, Irvine University of California at Irvine Connects Coursework to In-Demand Skills



- Uses bar charts to communicate and rank order in-demand skills that local and regional employers require of candidates
- Offers a "relevancy score" to connect those skills to program curricula, and translate the academic value of programs into career value for prospective students



Seton Hall University School of Law Combines Multiple Data Points in Simple Infographic



- Uses labor market data from a market research brief completed by the COE Forum to build an infographic and display advertisements for prospective students
- Materials communicate the career opportunity associated with one of its programs
- The infographic includes numerous forms of data visualization, including:
 - Bar charts rank ordering in-demand skills
 - Infographic-style data points to size the job market and projected growth in open positions
 - Maps indicating the locations of available job opportunities

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Labor Market Data Marketing Taxonomy (cont.)

Example 3: Integrated Program Sheets

While incorporating single labor market data points into program pages and marketing campaigns represents a crucial first step to articulating the career value of a given program, progressive institutions have begun experimenting with different formats to convey multiple data points and types of information together in a single, cohesive prospect experience. Program sheets or program pages that include multiple types of labor market or employer demand data, in different visual formats, offer prospective students an opportunity to deeply explore a given program and determine whether that program is the right fit for them personally and professionally.



Combines Multiple Types of Outcomes Data to Present a One-Stop Source of Program Information

Program Description
A succinct description of the program includes learning outcomes and relevant information for students unfamiliar with the topic or program option

Vanity URL
Unique program URL helps to track prospective student leads who may have learned about the program through the program sheet

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT
CSUGlobal.edu/MITM • 800-920-6723

The Master of Information Technology Management program is designed to prepare students for a wide variety of leadership roles within technology-rich environments. The program focuses on applying global perspectives and essential leadership tools to the strategic planning and efficient implementing of IT operations to meet organizational objectives. Through an increased understanding and awareness of the effective use of technical advancements at the enterprise level, graduates of this program will be prepared for positions as information technology managers or senior leaders in technology-driven industries.

Careers
Computer Systems Manager
Data Processing Manager
Computing Services Director
Information Systems Manager
Director of Application Development
Technical Services Manager

Career Outcomes
This information sheet provides concrete examples of occupational outcomes that program graduates will be qualified to pursue

Degree Optimization
CSU-Global offers Awards of Completion and Skills Endorsements to help you spotlight the knowledge, skills, and abilities that hiring managers find essential to success in the field. Visit csuglobal.edu/gr-degree-optimization to learn more.
In the Master of Information Technology Management program, you will earn the following Awards of Completion, documenting your mastery of these subjects:

Decision Making and Problem Solving in Information Technology and Leadership	Strategic Information Technology Management in the 21st Century
--	---

Projected Job Growth
Includes projected available job openings through 2022 related to the program, to size the career opportunity for program graduates

97,100
Expected related job openings due to growth, replacement, and retirement between 2012-2022²

Bespoke Credentialing System
"Degree Optimizations" provide awards of completion to students while they are enrolled in a program, which communicate the job-ready skills they have developed following their completion of various course sequences; this system translates the academic value of the program into resume-ready skills to discuss with potential employers

Source: Colorado State University Global Campus, "Online Master's Degree in Information Technology Management," <https://csuglobal.edu/graduate/masters-degrees/information-technology-management>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Labor Market Data Marketing Taxonomy (cont.)

Example 4: Interactive Website Content

While interactive website features including net price calculators are becoming more common, they are still relatively rare across higher education websites. However, some progressive institutions have developed interactive features that enable prospective students to explore the career value of the institution's programs. Interactivity provides an engaging distinction for a university or college website, and creates an easily "shareable" opportunity for prospective students to send the website to friends, family members, and colleagues. Further, interactive features can connect to any of the previous three labor market marketing examples.

1 Empower Prospective Students to Explore Program-to-Career Links with Interactive Web Features



The screenshot shows an interactive website for Ivy Tech Community College. On the left is a 'career wheel' with various program segments. On the right is a detailed page for 'Optometric Technology' showing a salary of \$14.34/hour and a 'Learn More' button.

Ivy Tech Community College
Uses an interactive "career wheel" tool embedded on its main website to offers prospective students the opportunity to explore the earnings potential associated with its portfolio of market-aligned programs. Students may spin the wheel to learn about a randomly selected position, or may click to a desired occupation to learn more about its associated earnings per hour, and receive a brief description of the program.

2 Enable Students to Deeply Explore Individual Career Options of Interest, and Related Available Programs

The screenshot shows a detailed program page for 'Optometric Technology'. It features a 'page menu' at the top left, a 'Home > Optometric Technology' breadcrumb at the top right, and a large green section with the following text: 'Median Optician salary in Indiana \$14.34/hour', '104 Annual Job Openings projected number of job openings through 2020', and 'apply now' button. A 'WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAM?' section is also visible.

If a student decides to click into a single program to learn more, she/he is taken to a labor market-focused program page, which provides a more detailed description of the occupation to which the program is aligned (e.g., optometric technology), median hourly earnings in the state, and the number of projected job openings through 2020. Prospective students can then discuss these data points further with enrollment staff, or apply to the program directly.

Source: Ivy Tech Community College, <https://www.ivytech.edu/>, "Optometric Technology," <https://www.ivytech.edu/optometric-tech/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 3: Affinity Group Partnership Guide

Tool Overview

COE leaders require actionable intelligence about market trends and employer needs to maintain competitive program portfolios, and cannot achieve that goal solely with structural economic data from sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics. While real-time labor market data sources provide some insight, qualitative intelligence directly from professionals in the field is critical to truly understanding market needs. Professional organizations and other formal and informal interest groups represent an underutilized source of inspiration for program development and marketing, as well as under-tapped sources of prospective students. Units and institutions that are able to successfully partner with professional organizations can develop a virtuous partnership cycle of needs assessment, program development, and training to remain nimble and responsive to market needs.

This tool provides start-to-finish support for members seeking to partner with key influencers, create or partner with formal and informal affinity groups, and leverage those groups for market intelligence and program enrollment.



Part 1: Key Influencer Identification Guide

Step-by-step guidelines for identifying, qualifying, and engaging key “influencers,” or known professionals with large followings in a given field, for marketing or instructional purposes.



Part 2: Meetup.com Partnership Process Map

Step-by-step process to effectively identify and partner with existing Meetup.com groups, gather program development intelligence, and promote new programs.



Part 3: Guide to Creating a New Meetup.com Group

Step-by-step process to create new Meetup.com groups to attract local professional interest, capitalize on influencer relationships, gather market intelligence, and promote new programs.



Part 4: Professional Organization Partnership Guide

High-level guidance for initiating educational partnerships with professional organizations, and approaching organizations to glean intelligence to support program development and further B2B partnership opportunities.



Part 5: Market Intelligence Questionnaire Templates

Templates for questionnaires to deliver to employers and employees affiliated with professional organizations and Meetup.com groups to glean intelligence related to local educational and training needs and program development opportunities.

Part 1: Key Influencer Identification Guide

Finding students as they explore professional options online, such as when they are reading about new industry trends or checking in with their LinkedIn groups, is critical to capturing the attention and interest of career-oriented prospective students. However, these students are often skeptical of traditional advertising approaches, and value recommendations from trusted sources of branded solicitations.

Follow the steps below to identify those external entities—bloggers, social media groups, professional organizations, and thought leaders—that are highly influential in the field in which you are developing a new program or marketing an existing program. These steps can be completed as a one-time project (likely stretching over the course of a week), but many prefer to consistently track key influencers over time.

Process Overview



Process Step-by-Step

Step 1:
Gather Information

Search for...

- Blogs
- Articles
- Social media posts

...To Find:

- Blog authors
- Journalists
- Social media super users
- Professional organizations

Use: search engines, Google Alerts, and social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook

Record:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Date | <input type="checkbox"/> Subject |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Source | <input type="checkbox"/> # of comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Author | <input type="checkbox"/> # of followers / readers |

See the [Web Presence Optimization Toolkit](#) for more information on Google Alerts.

Step 2:
Make Cuts Based on Level of Influence

Remove any entries that seem insufficiently influential. Warning signs include:

- Having an unprofessional or sparse bio
- Having very few comments (check for repeat commenters and author comments that could add false volume)
- Having low-quality comments (e.g., off-topic, spam, relatives, etc.—essentially not the type of people you envision enrolling in your program)
- Having a small readership
- Copying another source’s content—unless their copy draws a lot of quality comments

Source: “Web Presence Optimization Toolkit: Methodology for Identifying Key Influencers,” EAB, <https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/continuing-and-online-education-forum/toolkits/2014/web-presence-optimization-toolkit>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Key Influencer Identification Guide (cont.)

Step 3:
Rank Based on Level of Influence and Audience Reach

Determine how powerful an influencer the source is. A source is influential if it has some or all of the following:

Attribute	Method of Measuring	Ranking Criteria		
		High Reach (3pts)	Middle Reach (2pts)	Low Reach (1pt)
Follower Activity Score	Calculate the ratio of comments to posts	21:1+	6:1 – 20:1	1:1 – 5:1
Follower Size Score	Record # of followers or best guess at size of readership	201+	51 – 200	1 – 50
Follower Fit Score	Rate how often the site seems to be speaking to your target market specifically	81 – 100%	41 – 80%	1 – 40%

Rank the individual attributes of each identified influencer using the above criteria

Combine individual attribute ranking scores to create a composite ranking score

Arrange all identified influencers in ascending order of composite ranking score using the below table

Influencer Name	Follower Activity Score	Follower Size Score	Follower Fit Score	Total Score

Step 4:
Allocate Influencer Cultivation

Assign top scoring influencers to staff members for cultivation. Staff members should reach out to prospective influencer partners and maintain regular contact with them, discussing their work and how it relates to unit or institutional programs and initiatives.

Task one staff person with the responsibility of revisiting this process every six to eight months to refresh the list.

Meet as a team approximately once every six or so months to conduct an informal meta-analysis of the list to ascertain whether certain influencers or types of influencers are most valuable (i.e., yield more viable prospects, help convert existing prospects, etc.)

Use the Web Presence Optimization Toolkit's "[Guidelines for Cultivating Key Influencer Relationships](#)" for specific guidelines on developing cross-linkages with each type of influencer (blogger, social media group, and professional organization).

Source: "Web Presence Optimization Toolkit: Methodology for Identifying Key Influencers," EAB, <https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/continuing-and-online-education-forum/toolkits/2014/web-presence-optimization-toolkit>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Key Influencer Identification Guide (cont.)

Step 5: Invite Influencer to Teach in Course or Program

Invite the influencer to lead a session at a standing Meetup.com group event or similar educational event, either on campus or at an off-campus location. If the influencer already leads a Meetup.com group or other formal or informal interest group, proceed to step two, below.

Observe the influencer's performance in front of a group participants.

- Does the influencer bring sufficient professional experience and expertise to the presentation to add value for members and participants?
- Does the influencer manage his or her time well
- Does the influencer respond appropriately and helpfully to participant questions?
- How interactive is the session?

Invite qualified and/or successful influencers to teach a single course once you have had the opportunity to observe and vet them as a potential instructor.

Monitor course feedback to ensure that influencer continues to provide valuable educational experiences for students.

Part 2: Primer for Partnering with Meetup.com Groups

Communities of Interest Represent Rich Source of Intelligence and Enrollments

Meetup.com is a global platform that enables users to create communities around shared personal and professional interests. Progressive institutions have partnered with existing Meetup.com groups to better understand the education and training needs of their local and regional markets, develop new programs based on group participants' feedback, and even source instructors for new programs based on performance in front of Meetup.com groups and ability to attract new students into the program. Institutions have also created new groups to identify specific educational and training needs within a broader field, develop new programs to meet those needs, and to generate awareness and enrollments for newly developed and launched programs.

Use the below guidelines to effectively identify and partner with existing Meetup.com groups, and/or to develop new Meetup.com groups where one does not already exist.

Basic Statistics



30.1M

Members worldwide

270,024

Meetups and counting

182

Countries hosting

Meetup Partnership Process

Conduct Market Research to Identify In-Demand Program Opportunities

- Use labor market data, questionnaires, interviews, and other intelligence-gathering methods to identify potential in-demand programs based on demonstrable local or regional employer (e.g., hiring, training) or employee (e.g., skill building) needs
- Solicit COE Forum support identifying high-priority opportunities

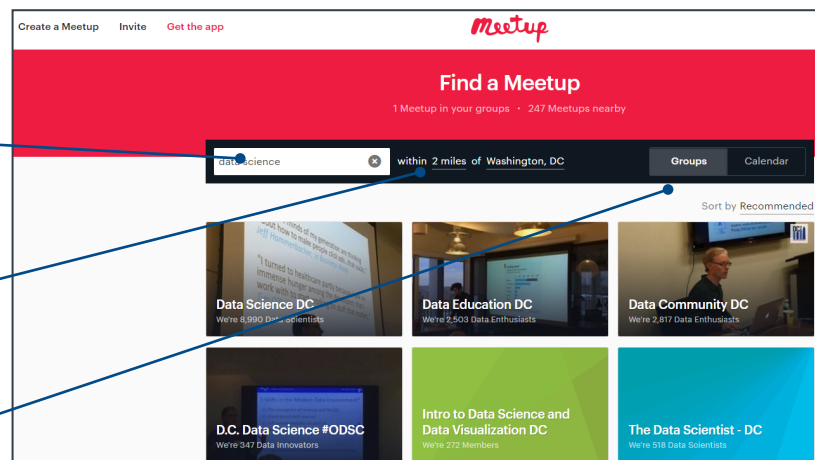
Search for Existing Meetup.com Group(s)

- Visit www.Meetup.com and sign up to create an account
- Navigate to the "Find a Meetup" page, and follow the below instructions
- Determine whether Meetup groups related to program opportunity exist
- If relevant groups do exist, continue to page 87
- If relevant groups do not exist, skip to page 90

Input keywords related to your identified program opportunity into the search bar

Set geographic parameters for your desired Meetup location (e.g., "within 2 miles of zip code 20037")

Sort search results by either existing groups, or by upcoming events

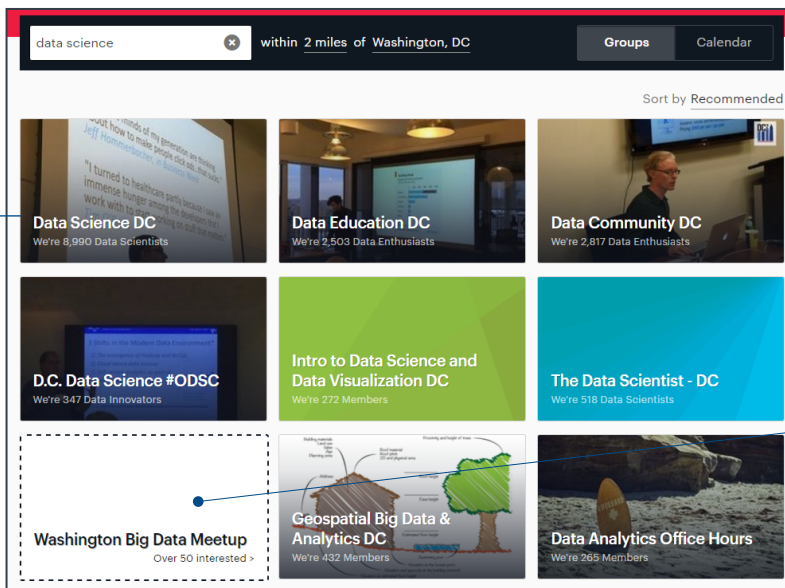


Source: Meetup, www.meetup.com; EAB interviews and analysis.

Primer for Partnering with Meetup.com Groups (cont.)

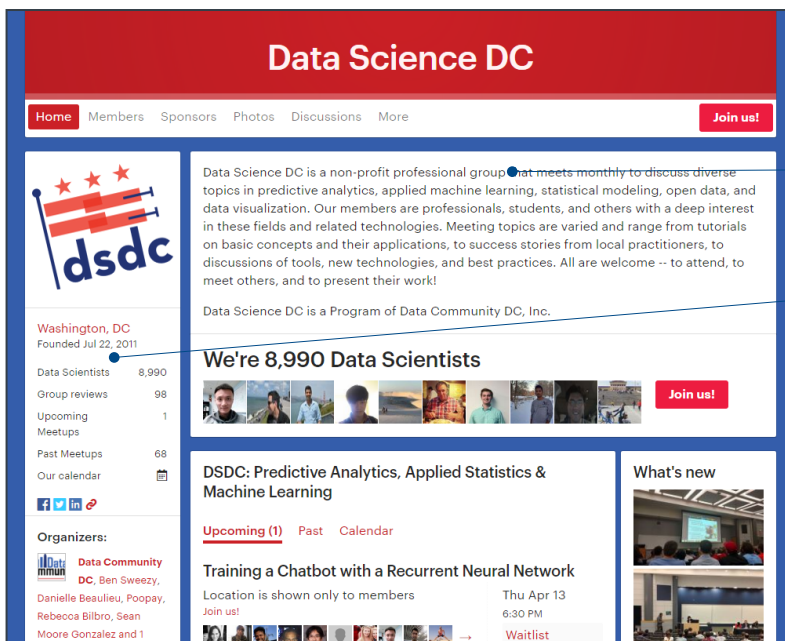
Identify Relevant Meetup Groups

- Browse the search results page to identify the most relevant groups to your program opportunity.
- Be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page to look through all available groups, as multiple relevant groups related to your program opportunity might exist.



Numerous relevant groups may exist, requiring careful research and consideration to identify the correct partnership opportunity.

Groups that appear with dotted-line borders and no profile image require an organizer; click into the group to nominate your unit!



Read through the group's description to ensure that it matches your program opportunity

Note important information related to the group's size, activity, sponsors, and meeting content

Primer for Partnering with Meetup.com Groups (cont.)

Screen Relevant Meetups

- Select the most relevant groups and research their main group pages
- Note important information for each potentially relevant group and compare to guidelines and benchmarks below
- Identify the single most relevant Meetup group to explore partnership

Checklist Criteria for Quality Meetup.com Leads

Number of members	Meetup groups must have at least 1,000 members to be considered large enough to merit a formal partnership approach (Note: this number may be larger or smaller depending on the average Meetup group size in your geographic location).
Frequency of Meetups	Meetup.com requires that groups maintain a baseline level of activity, but the most promising potential partners are those that host at least one well-attended Meetup per month.
Average Meetup event attendance	At least 15 members should attend each event, and attendance should be varied from event to event (e.g., not just the same 15 members showing up every time) for the group to be considered appropriately active for potential partnership.
Meetup event content	Meetup events should be varied in both content (e.g., exploring various topics within the group's overarching theme) and format (e.g., lectures, workshops, networking events).
Content of group reviews	Meetup group reviews should be mostly positive, though negative feedback can still provide interesting insights.
Number and type of sponsor(s)	An abundance of sponsors may indicate that the group is less willing to entertain additional partnership solicitations, though this is not necessarily the case. Note the number of sponsors, sponsor type (e.g., company, nonprofit, university or college), and sponsor role (e.g., providing meeting space, providing financial and catering support) to determine where your institution can provide needed support.
Meetup group leadership	The group should have active organizers and co-organizers who sometimes host their own events but also frequently manage to secure speakers and other hosts.
Related Meetup groups	Each Meetup page will provide a list of additional Meetup groups that contain overlapping members. This list can provide additional inspiration for partnership approaches.

Primer for Partnering with Meetup.com Groups (cont.)

After Identifying the Most Promising Potential Partner, Attend Events in Person

- Navigate to the group's calendar of upcoming events and choose two or three to attend in order to get a sense for how cutting edge the content is and how engaged the attendees are
- Note the number of attendees at each event you attend in person, the content of the event, and the quality of the presenter
- Discuss the events with other attendees. What do they like about the group, or this event in particular? What do they not like?

Reach Out to Connect Directly with the Meetup Group's Organizer(s), Preferably in Person

- Introduce yourself at an in-person event, or reach out to the group's organizer(s) over email or social media
- Explain who you are, what you do, and who you work for
- Explain that you are hoping to learn more about the professional needs of the field in which the Meetup group operates to ensure that your unit's current and future programs align as closely as possible with market trends
- Offer your unit as a partner or sponsor to the group, providing either meeting space (most common), financial or catering support, or expert presenters and SMEs

Connect with Meetup Group Members

- With the permission of the group's organizer(s), begin to collect more purposeful market intelligence from Meetup attendees, in the form of surveys or in-person interviews
- Determine the degree to which Meetup attendees require additional training or education related to your program opportunity, and whether they would be willing to enroll in your proposed program
- Engage with organizers and event hosts to determine individual interest in supporting program development or teaching a course within a full program as an adjunct

Launch and Market Your New Program

- Launch either your full program or a single course, and offer Meetup members a discount to enroll
- Use a discount code to track leads generated through the Meetup group

Part 3: Guide to Creating a New Meetup.com Group

Leverage Influencer Relationships to Create New Communities of Interest

When a Meetup.com group aligned to your proposed new program opportunity does not already exist, you may choose to create one yourself. While Meetup.com groups do cost a nominal monthly fee to create and require effort to develop engaging event content, such groups can generate organic interest for new program opportunities among engaged professionals, and can serve as a vital source of market intelligence to inform new program design.

Identify an Influencer

- Use Part 1 of this tool to identify key influencers in your proposed program's field
- The influencer should have a large and engaged enough following to draw interested attendees to a new Meetup.com group
- The influencer must be willing to participate actively in the group, taking on the majority of work concerning developing ideas for new events, securing speakers and facilitators, and advertising the Meetup to his or her network

Create a New Meetup in your Area Related to your Identified Program Opportunity

- On the main Meetup.com page, navigate to "Create a Meetup" and follow the resulting instructions
- Select the group's location
- Select your group's related topics from the available list, using the search bar to narrow your choices
- Select a name for your Meetup group and provide a detailed description
- Create the group!
 - Meetup.com groups range in price from \$9.99 to \$14.99 per month to organize and host

Develop Content for Meetup Group

- Assign a member of your team (it could be yourself) to serve as primary Meetup group coordinator, who is responsible for working with your partner influencer to develop Meetup event content and manage space and other Meetup logistics
- Try to plan out at least three months' worth of event content during quarterly meetings with the influencer
- Ensure that Meetup event content is varied in both topic and format
- Monitor attendance and engagement levels, and work with your influencer to respond appropriately to any negative or critical feedback

Guide to Creating a New Meetup.com Group (cont.)

Gather Intelligence from Group Members

- Begin to collect purposeful market intelligence from Meetup attendees, in the form of surveys or in-person interviews following Meetup events
- Determine the degree to which Meetup attendees require additional training or education related to your program opportunity, and whether they would be willing to enroll in your proposed program
- Determine influencer or other presenters' interest in supporting program development or teaching a course within a full program as an adjunct

Launch and Market Your New Program

- Launch either your full program or a single course, and offer Meetup members a discount to enroll
- Use a discount code to track leads generated through the Meetup group

Part 4: Professional Organization Partnership Guide

Professional organizations and other industry groups represent rich sources of market intelligence and potential students, and COE units should endeavor to build relationships with local, regional, and national organizations aligned to the programs the unit offers. Marketers and program developers should research industry and occupational associations that are related to their programs, and forge a connection with content and educational leaders at those organizations.

Use Part 4 of this tool to understand how to structure mutually beneficial partnerships with professional organizations. Then, use Part 5 of this tool to survey professional organization memberships to glean real-time intelligence on local professional educational and training needs.

Defining Partnership Value for Professional Organizations

How Professional Organizations Can Benefit from Partnership

- Free resources: unit websites (its blogs and free webinars) and information about programs are resources to the association's members
- Short cuts for members working toward an organization-sponsored certification: offer applicable information about approved courses provided by your unit, which can lower the amount of time employees need to spend working in the field before becoming "certified" by the professional organization
- Access to employers: if you are willing to list the association on your website, you increase the association's name recognition among employees that could be members
- Access to industry professionals and subject matter experts (SMEs); you can help by contributing articles (provided by your SMEs) to any periodicals they produce
- Immediate co-branding before the organization gets to know you

Topics to Avoid

- Exclusive access to organization members
- Hard-sell language or aggressive calls to action (e.g., "apply here")

How to Structure Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

✓ Provide Program Information and Contact Details for Associations' Education/Resources Pages

Ask that your best-fit program be featured on the organization's "resources" or education page. Also provide a contact name, phone number, and email address should an incredibly eager prospect stumble upon the website.

✓ Share Links to Free Webinars, MOOCs, or Blogs

Suggest that the association link to any free, industry-focused resources you offer prospects.

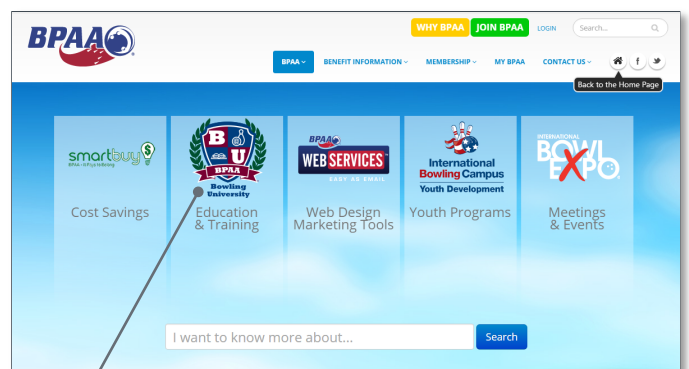
✓ Host Association Information on "About the Industry" or "Career" Section of Program Website

Professional organizations hope to reach as wide an audience as possible; offer to list their website as a resource for prospective students considering a career in relevant industry. Point out that employers may also spot them in this context.

✓ Offer Subject-Matter-Expert Perspective

Suggest that an instructor write an article as a guest contributor, offering an authentic voice and knowledge about the association's focus industry or occupation.

Case Study: Anne Arundel Community College Partners with the Bowling Proprietors' Association of America



Education & Training

The "Education and Training" link on the Bowling Proprietors' Association of America directs visitors to online modules offered through Anne Arundel Community College.

Source: "Web Presence Optimization Toolkit: Guidelines for Cultivating Key Influencers," EAB, <https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/continuing-and-online-education-forum/toolkits/2014/web-presence-optimization-toolkit>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Part 5: Market Intelligence Questionnaire Templates

Many professional organizations and Meetup groups will allow third parties to send short surveys to their members and attendees, which institutions can use to gather primary market intelligence on real-time hiring and training needs in their local and regional markets. These surveys may be distributed either in person or over email.

Market intelligence questionnaires should directly apply to the content of the professional association or Meetup event at which they are distributed, and should in general reflect the interests and needs of the profession in question. Surveys may be distributed and collected anonymously if you deem that you will receive more authentic responses. Use the below templates as starting points to develop your own survey—feel free to adjust the number and type of questions as necessary.

Questionnaire Template for Employees

Basic Information	
Name	
Title	
Employer	
Email Address	
Educational or Training Needs	
Please list the top five skills or competencies for which you feel you require additional education or training to be successful in your current role:	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Please list the top five skills or competencies for which you feel you require additional education or training to secure a promotion or pay raise:	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Please rank-order the following topics based on their relevance and importance to success in your current role:	___ [Insert testing program topic 1] ___ [Insert testing program topic 2] ___ [Insert testing program topic 3] ___ [Insert testing program topic 4] ___ [Insert testing program topic 5]
Please rank-order the following topics based on your willingness or ability to pay for training in each area:	___ [Insert testing program topic 1] ___ [Insert testing program topic 2] ___ [Insert testing program topic 3] ___ [Insert testing program topic 4] ___ [Insert testing program topic 5]
Do you currently receive funding from your employer to secure additional education or training?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If so, how much?	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1-\$999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000-\$2,499 <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500-\$5,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000+

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Market Intelligence Questionnaire Templates (cont.)

Questionnaire Template for Employers

Basic Information	
Name	
Title	
Organization or Company	
Organization or Company Size:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-49 employees <input type="checkbox"/> 50-99 employees <input type="checkbox"/> 100-249 employees <input type="checkbox"/> 250-500 employees <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000+ employees
Email Address	

Educational or Training Needs			
Please list the top three positions or roles are you organization with the greatest education or training needs:	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____		
For each of those three positions, please list the three to five skills or competencies that each most requires to be successful:	<i>[Position 1]</i> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	<i>[Position 2]</i> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	<i>[Position 3]</i> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
Please rank-order the following topics based on their relevance and importance to your organization's success:	___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 1]</i> ___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 2]</i> ___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 3]</i> ___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 4]</i> ___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 5]</i>		
Please rank-order the following topics based on your willingness or ability to pay for training for your employees in each area:	___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 1]</i> ___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 2]</i> ___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 3]</i> ___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 4]</i> ___ <i>[Insert testing program topic 5]</i>		

Assessment of Current Training Solutions		
To what degree do you currently offer training and development opportunities to your employees?		
How do you currently provide such trainings (e.g., external partner, online videos, internal training staff)?		
What is your organization or company's current per-employee budget for training and development?	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1-\$999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000-\$2,499 <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500-\$5,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000+	
Would you be interested in learning more about training and development opportunities available in partnership with <i>[INSTITUTION NAME]</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 4: Non-working Marketing Spend Business Case

Tool Overview

Marketing Is About More Than Just Advertising: What Academic Leaders Need to Know

COE leaders, particularly those with out-of-industry experience, understand the need to invest in marketing to promote existing programs and facilitate growth. However, many see the function largely as advertising spend, in both print and digital formats, that places a product-first message with an enrollment-focused call to action in front of prospective students.

While this method of marketing has succeeded in the past, prospective students have become increasingly skeptical of product-first solicitations, and such strategies alone are no longer effective. Today's institutions must rely on a more diversified multichannel marketing approach that combines digital and print advertising with investments in content creation, social media presence, and direct user engagement.

The Challenge with Creating New Content: Additional Demands on Staff Time

Creating engaging and informative content that builds trust and credibility with prospective students is as important, if not more so, than line-item investments in channel-based advertising campaigns for generating interest in your portfolio of programs. However, content creation requires staff time and effort, rather than simple financial investment, and many marketing departments lack the time and human resources to invest in creating new content.

Part One: Explaining Marketing's Challenge to Your Executive

Use the first page to provide high-level educational material for your executive, which lays out the challenges associated with continuing to invest in an advertising-first strategy:

- Rising digital advertising costs
- Increasing digital advertisement exposure
- Rising adblocking technology adoption
- Miniscule click-through rates on digital ads.

These quantitative and qualitative data can help create urgency for your executive, and provide the background required to make a successful case for additional investment in non-working marketing activities.

Part Two: Making the Business Case for Non-working Marketing Spend

The second and third pages provide a template for a business case related to either a new marketing content creation effort, new marketing staff line, restructuring of existing staff time to include additional or alternative marketing activities (e.g., developing social media content, cultivating key influencer contacts), or other effort. Example responses are included in italics.

Traditional Marketing Has Reached a Tipping Point

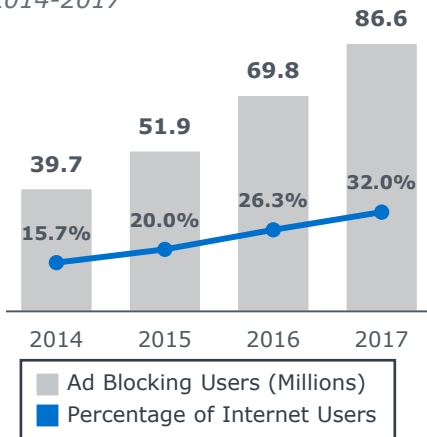
Increased Competition for Consumer Attention Drives Up Costs for Higher Education

Demand for consumer attention has never been greater, but the supply of that attention has never been scarcer. Today's marketers must spend increasing amounts of time and money to convince consumers to pay attention to their messages, but increasing investment in direct marketing and advertising has become an unsustainable strategy to maintain lead generation and enrollments. Increasing advertising efforts across industries, focused on the same finite number of platforms, have simply driven costs higher.

Dollars Spent on Digital Ads (in Billions)
United States, All Industries, 2011-2015



Ad Blocking Growth in the U.S.
2014-2017



Decreasing Returns on Traditional Advertising

As companies, organizations, and institutions vie for consumer attention with increasingly costly and numerous advertisements, those same consumers have reacted with increased skepticism and resentment, adopting ad blocking technology and neglecting to engage with the advertisements they do see.

Consumers Ignore Ubiquitous Advertisements

362 Average digital ad exposures per user per day in the U.S.

.06% Average click-through rate of display ads

The Takeaway: New Investment in Diversified Marketing Strategy Needed to Compete

Advertising alone will not be enough to build awareness of your institution or unit and generate sufficient enrollments for your programs. Rather than product-first advertisements that communicate information about new and existing programs, career-oriented prospective adult students demand engaging, informative, and relevant content that helps them plan and manage their personal and professional lives.

Marketing outreach must include engaging content that highlights the career value of the programs that you offer, integrating labor market data, student stories, and outcomes into multichannel communication strategies. While marketing can communicate some of this information through direct advertising, investments in website design, social media presence, in-person events, and other types of content will become increasingly necessary to capture and sustain a prospective student's attention, and convince him or her to enroll.

Budget allocations for marketing must reflect this new reality, and set aside resources for content creation—including staff time—and engagement with prospective students over social media.

Source: Lu K, Holcomb J, "Fact Sheet: Digital News Revenue," Pew Research Center, June 15, 2016, <http://www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/digital-news-revenue-fact-sheet>; "Adults Spend 10 Hours Per Day with the Media, but Note Only 150 Ads," Media Dynamics Incorporated, September 2014, <http://www.mediadynamicsinc.com/uploads/files/PR092214-Note-only-150-Ads-2mk.pdf>; "26.3% of Internet Users Will Use Ad Blockers This Year," eMarketer, <https://www.emarketer.com/corporate/coverage/be-prepared-ad-blocking>; Rich Media Gallery, "Display Benchmarks," Google, <http://www.richmediagallery.com/tools/benchmarks>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Marketing Investment Business Case Template

Use the below template to describe and advocate for additional marketing investment. Use the first question to describe your proposed investment (e.g., more staff time dedicated to social media, new hire dedicated to graphic design and content creation) and explain its expediency and differentiation from existing marketing strategies. Then describe the benefits and return-on-investment you anticipate from the tool, as well as how you intend to measure success. Finally, describe the anticipated costs and risks, and how you intend to defray those.

1. Provide an Overview of Proposed Marketing Investment and Explain Why It Is Necessary Now

Describe your proposed marketing investment (e.g., new staff, new content creation, restructuring of existing staff roles to include additional or alternative efforts)

Explain in detail why the proposed strategy requires investment now

Describe how it differs from or improves upon existing efforts

2. Describe the Investment's Benefit(s), Return on Investment (ROI), and Success Metrics

Projected Benefit(s)	Anticipated ROI	Metrics to Track	Data Collection Methodology
<i>Increase prospective student traffic to social media accounts and increase engagement on social media accounts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased engagement on social media builds awareness for programs Increased enrollments resulting from exposure on social media 	<i>Social media metrics:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likes and comments <i>Social distribution:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares <i>Incoming student response data:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which social media student was persuaded to enroll 	<i>Social media monitoring</i> <i>Standard questions asked of incoming students</i>
[Custom]			

3. Outline the Cost(s), and Risk(s) Associated with This Investment

Estimated Cost and/or Level of Effort	Risk Driver(s)	Strategies to Mitigate Risk
<i>Additional five hours per week of marketing coordinator time to manage social media account</i>	<i>Reduced marketing coordinator time spent developing and sharing daily Google Display Ad status updates due to increased time spent producing content for social media accounts</i>	<i>Submit weekly, rather than daily, status updates for ongoing Google Display Ad campaigns</i>
[Custom]		

Tool 5: Misrepresentation Rule Briefing Sheet

Tool Overview

As more students seek evidence of career value or return-on-investment (ROI) from educational programs, communicating outcomes with labor market data, job placement rates, and student testimonials will become necessary for programs to stay or become competitive. However, marketing outcomes carries a risk, and many marketers and COE leaders worry about the potential legal consequences of appearing to falsely “promise” graduate outcomes by using labor market data, survey response data, and other sources. These concerns largely stem from high-profile Department of Education enforcement of the Title IV Misrepresentation Rule against for-profit institutions such as Corinthian Colleges and ITT Technical Institute.

This tool provides important information and background on the Department of Education’s title IV Misrepresentation Rule and its enforcement to date, and provides guidance for members about red flags to avoid when using outcomes data. The following information reflects the COE Forum’s own analyses of Department of Education legislation, and conversations with higher education policy experts.

Please note: This Briefing Sheet provides an informational overview and is not intended as legal advice. Please review The Advisory Board Company’s legal caveat, available on page 2 of this publication, for further information.

Title IV Misrepresentation Rule in Brief

What Is the Misrepresentation Rule?

The Department of Education's (ED) Title IV Misrepresentation Rule was adopted in 2010 to enforce prohibitions against deceptive marketing related to the "nature of the educational program," "nature of financial charges," and "employability of graduates" on the part of institutions that receive federal funds through student aid. All Misrepresentation Rule enforcement to date has focused on violations of the "employability of graduates" clause, which is also the aspect of the rule that most concerns members.

Rule Component

Information Covered



Nature of Educational Programs



General characteristics about a program, including its curriculum, experiential components, technology, instruction, interactions with faculty and other students, and overall experience



Nature of Financial Charges



All costs, fees, and other expenses associated with the program



Employability of Graduates



- Institution's knowledge about current or likely future conditions, compensation, or employment opportunities
- Government job market statistics in relation to the potential placement of its graduates
- Other requirements needed to be employed in the fields for which the training is provided (including disqualifiers, such as convictions)

What Are the Consequences of Violating the Misrepresentation Rule?

Institutions that violate the ED Misrepresentation Rule may face serious financial consequences, including revocation of eligibility to participate in Title IV, limiting or completely blocking access to federal financial aid. Institutions may also face a \$35,000-per-violation fine.

How Can Institutions Avoid Violating the Misrepresentation Rule?

The following strategies can help institutions to mitigate their risk of misleading current or prospective students about the employability of program graduates:

- Substantiate all program-related claims (e.g., graduate placement rates, student testimonials) with evidence that can be easily produced in the event of legal action
- Follow established rules of statistical significance and available guidelines (e.g., NACE survey response rate guidelines) when conducting graduate surveys or other data collection efforts
- Ensure that all website material, marketing collateral, and other information remains up-to-date
- Do not include any information on marketing collateral, website pages, or other institutionally affiliated publications that you cannot definitively verify and defend

Source: Harris K, "FAQs about Corinthian Colleges (Heald, Everest, and Wyotech Campuses)," State of California Department of Justice, March 2016, https://oag.ca.gov/consumers/general/consumers_cii_faqs; "ITT Educational Services," US Senate HELP Committee, http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/for_profit_report/PartII/ITT.pdf; "FTC Brings Enforcement Action Against DeVry University," Federal Trade Commission, January 2016, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2016/01/ftc-brings-enforcement-action-against-devry-university>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Enforcement of the Misrepresentation Rule

How Has the Misrepresentation Rule Been Enforced to Date?

To date, the Department of Education has not brought suit against an institution unless the Department is legally certain that the institution has deliberately lied to or misled students, accrediting bodies, or other stakeholders, and the Department typically only acts when it receives evidence of falsified job placement rate data. Though the rule technically covers “misleading” disclosures or claims in addition to blatantly false ones, the Department has only acted on falsities to date.

Examples of Enforcement

1 Corinthian Colleges



Background:

- Ceased operations in April 2015 due in part to rule enforcement
- Court-ordered to pay restitution and civil penalties of over \$1.1 billion

Examples of Misrepresentation:

- Knowingly published false job placement rates and salary data
- Advertised programs not actually offered
- Misrepresented credit transferability
- Unlawfully used military seals

2 ITT Technical Institute



Background:

- Closed all campuses in September 2016
- Letter of credit increased from \$124 million to approximately \$247 million

Examples of Misrepresentation:

- Overcharged for degree programs to maximize student loan-taking
- Placed graduates in low-wage jobs unrelated to their fields of study
- Aggressive recruiters obfuscated costs

3 DeVry University



Background:

- Settled with the Department of Education in October 2016
- Required to post a five-year letter of credit of no less than \$68.4 million

Examples of Misrepresentation:

- Misrepresented historical job placement data dating back to 1975
- Made false claims related to graduate earnings

Future Changes to the Rule

Borrower Defense to Repayment

To date, for any institution to be sanctioned under the Misrepresentation Rule the Department of Education has had to collect evidence and bring legal action itself. However, the new Borrower Defense to Repayment Rule, published on November 2016 with an enforcement date of July 2017, creates a single federal standard to simplify the loan discharge claims process for victims of Misrepresentation Rule violations. Under the rule students will be able to petition ED to have their Title IV loans completely discharged if they can prove that they have been lied to or misled by an institution under the criteria set forth by the Misrepresentation Rule.

- Aggrieved students may bring defense to repayment claims directly to the Department of Education
- Institutions found to be financially unsustainable or engaged in misconduct must set aside “letter of credit” to potentially repay students and the government
- Pell eligibility restored for students unable to complete course of study due to institution closure

Source: Harris K, “FAQs about Corinthian Colleges (Heald, Everest, and Wyotech Campuses,” State of California Department of Justice, March 2016, https://oag.ca.gov/consumers/general/consumers_cii_faqs; “ITT Educational Services,” US Senate HELP Committee, http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/for_profit_report/PartII/ITT.pdf; “FTC Brings Enforcement Action Against DeVry University,” Federal Trade Commission, January 2016, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2016/01/ftc-brings-enforcement-action-against-devry-university>; “Borrower Defense Rules finalized,” *Inside Higher Ed*; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 6: Social Media Marketing Channel Primer

Tool Overview

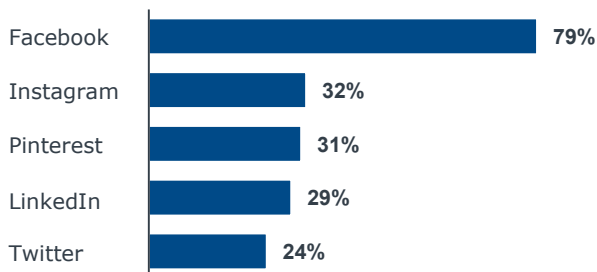
Today's prospective students access numerous websites across multiple different devices daily if not hourly. While outcomes marketing messages can effectively compel aspiring career changers and other professional students to consider further education, marketers must still deliver those messages on the right channel at the right time. This tool helps identify the demographics of individuals active on five common social media channels—Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Pinterest—according to the Pew Research Center's study on the demographics of key social networking platforms to help marketers determine which channels offer the best opportunity to reach high-affinity student groups.

Social Media Trends and Key Takeaways

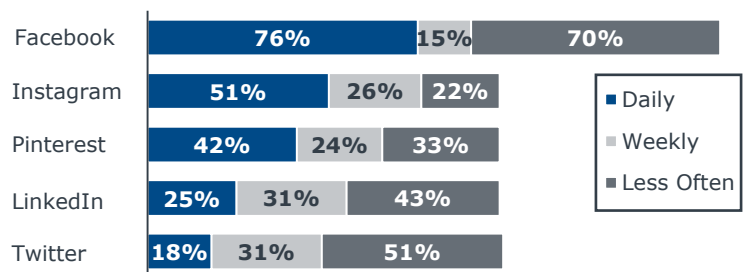
The following key findings from Pew Research's 2016 Social Media Update, the most formal and robust investigation of social media usage by U.S. adults, offer insight into changing digital behavior:

- More than half of online adults (56%) use more than one of the five social media platforms measured in this survey.
- Facebook continues to be the starting platform for most social media users. Among those who only use one social media platform, 88% indicate that Facebook is the one site that they use. Moreover, the vast majority of those who use other social media sites also use Facebook. For instance, 93% of Twitter users also use Facebook—as do 95% of Instagram users and 92% of Pinterest users.
- A majority of U.S. adults—62%—get news on social media, and 18% do so often.
- Among social media-using adults in the U.S., 35% have used social media to look for or research a job, 34% have used social media to inform their friends of an available job at their place of employment, 21% have applied for a job they initially found out about through their social media contacts.

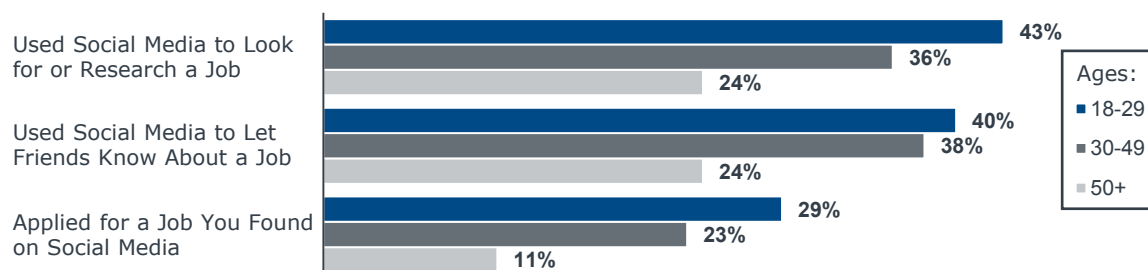
Social Media Usage Among All U.S. Internet-Using Adults



Frequency of Site Usage by Platform Users¹



Percentage of U.S. Social Media Users Who Have Used Those Platforms for Employment-Related Purposes



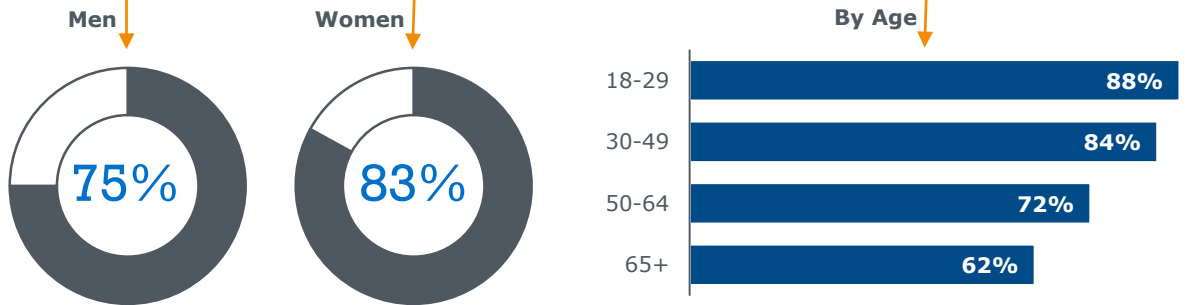
1) Percentage is relative to all that platform's users, so 76% of Facebook users use the site daily

Source: Pew Research Center, November 2016, "Social Media Update 2016," <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Facebook

Facebook Usage Among U.S. Adult Internet Users

- **79%** of U.S. adult internet users use Facebook
- **68%** of the entire U.S. adult population uses Facebook



Facebook Usage by Educational Attainment

High School Grad or Less



Some College

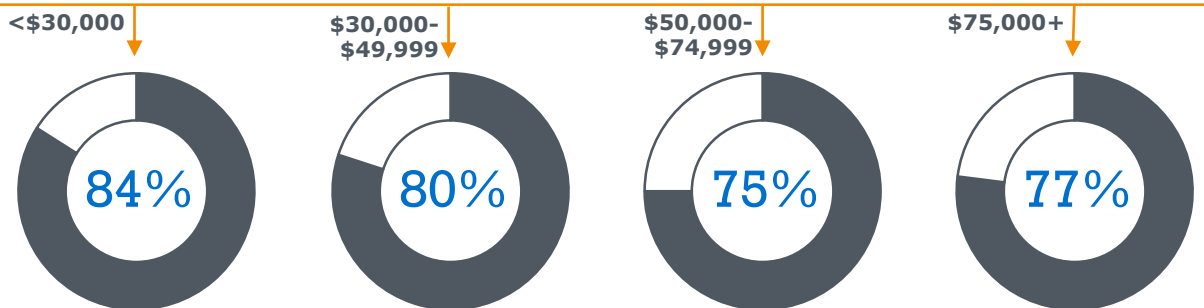


College +



Facebook Usage by Geography and Income

- Urban: **81%**
- Suburban: **77%**
- Rural: **81%**

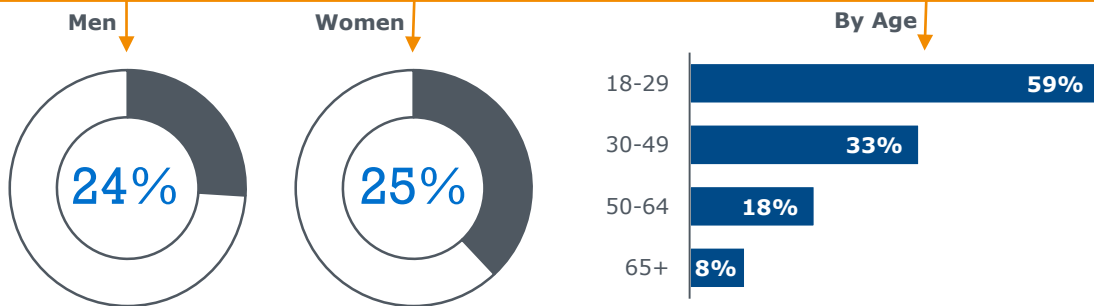


Source: Pew Research Center, November 2016, "Social Media Update 2016," <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Instagram

Instagram Usage Among U.S. Adult Internet Users

- **32%** of U.S. adult internet users use Instagram
- **28%** of the entire U.S. adult population uses Instagram



Instagram Usage by Educational Attainment

High School Grad or Less



Some College

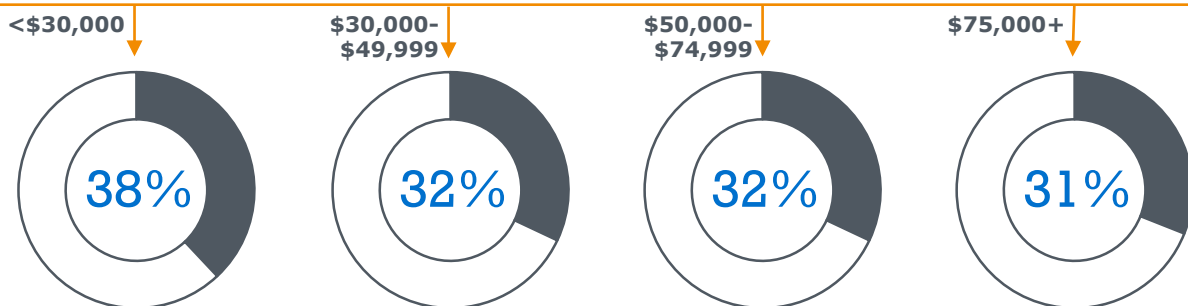


College +



Instagram Usage by Geography and Income

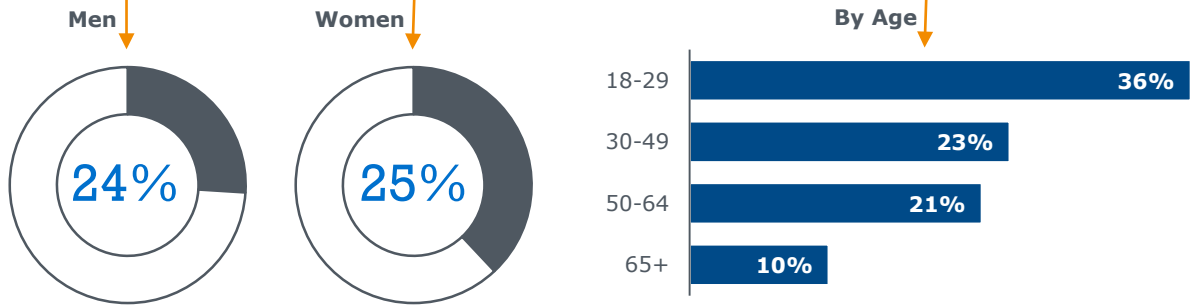
- Urban: **39%**
- Suburban: **28%**
- Rural: **31%**



Source: Pew Research Center, November 2016, "Social Media Update 2016," <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Twitter Usage Among U.S. Adult Internet Users

- 24% of U.S. adult internet users use Twitter
- 21% of the entire U.S. adult population uses Twitter



Twitter Usage by Educational Attainment

High School Grad or Less



Some College

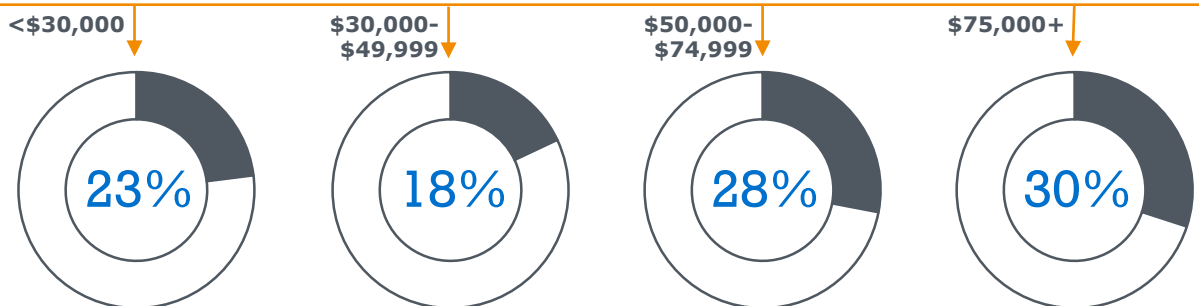


College +



Twitter Usage by Geography and Income

- Urban: 26%
- Suburban: 24%
- Rural: 24%

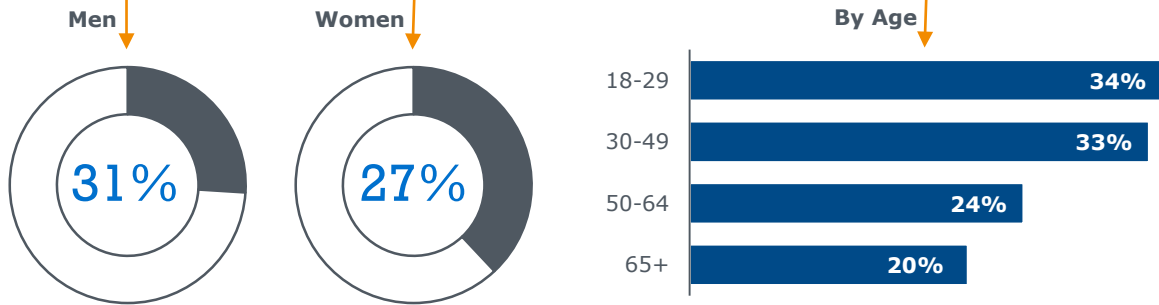


Source: Pew Research Center, November 2016, "Social Media Update 2016," <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn Usage Among U.S. Adult Internet Users

- 29% of U.S. adult internet users use LinkedIn
- 25% of the entire U.S. adult population uses LinkedIn



LinkedIn Usage by Educational Attainment

High School Grad or Less



Some College

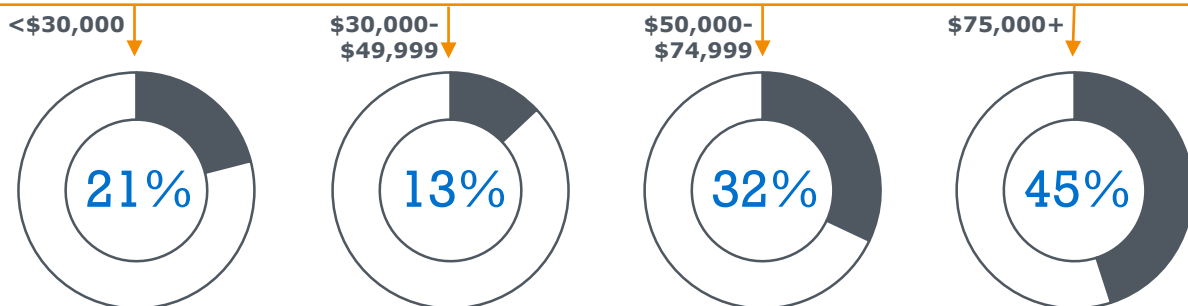


College +



LinkedIn Usage by Geography and Income

- Urban: 34%
- Suburban: 30%
- Rural: 18%

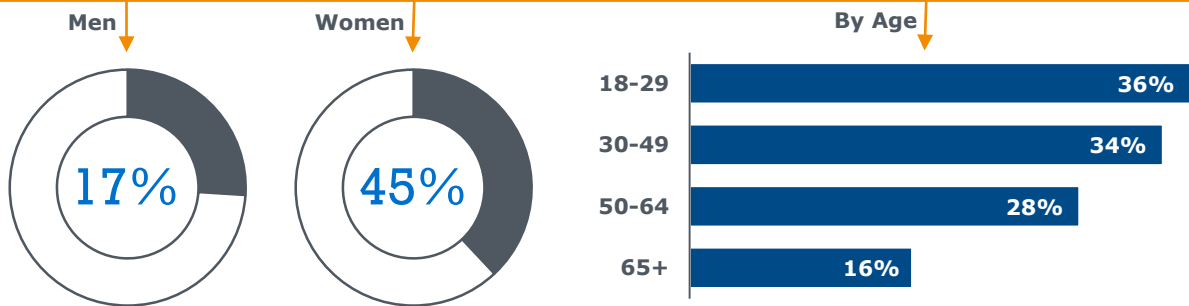


Source: Pew Research Center, November 2016, "Social Media Update 2016," <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Pinterest

Pinterest Usage Among U.S. Adult Internet Users

- **31%** of U.S. adult **internet users** use Pinterest
- **26%** of the **entire U.S. adult population** uses Pinterest

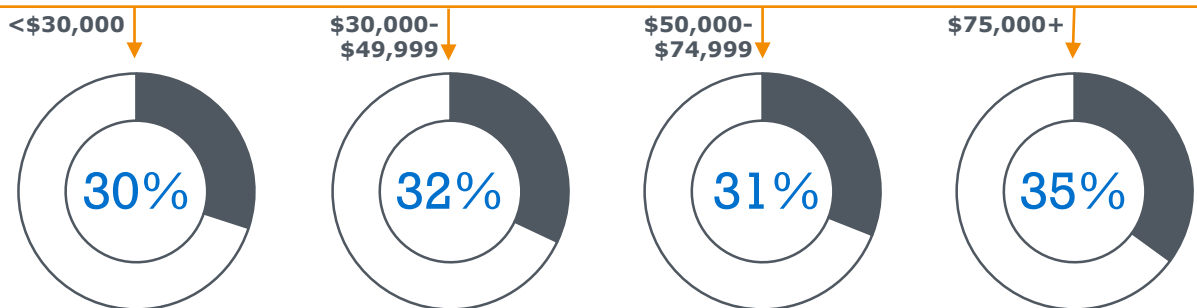


Pinterest Usage by Educational Attainment



Pinterest Usage by Geography and Income

- Urban: **30%**
- Suburban: **34%**
- Rural: **25%**



Source: Pew Research Center, November 2016, "Social Media Update 2016," <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>; EAB interviews and analysis.



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Advisors to Our Work

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practices are
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