Data-Driven, Human-Focused Recruitment: 10 Tips to Thrive in Online Program Marketing and Recruitment

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
All Campus Overview

Creative industry roots with an approach informed by data and analytics
- Founded in 2012
- More than 60 online programs, primarily at the master’s level
- Over 9,000 students currently enrolled

Our clients include:
- DePaul University
- George Washington University
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Pace University
- Teachers College, Columbia University
- University of Arizona
- University of Florida
- University of Southern California
Meet Applicants Where They Are

Tip #1: Add a chat feature

- Use real people, not bots
- “Leave a message” feature on nights and weekends
- Advanced: Experiment with formatting chat bubble and placement

Adding chat call out to upper navigation: 87% lift over control

Testing a bubble-head chat format: 82% lift in chat engagement over standard chat bubble
Ground Students in a Community

Tip #2: Send a welcome gift

- Send branded university “swag” to new admits
- Advanced: Include a custom welcome letter in each package
Start the Conversation

Tip #3: Reimagine your RFI

- Simplify inquiry form by requesting limited personal information
- Place form high and deliver something tangible when complete
- **Advanced**: A/B test form placement
- **Advanced**: Try different form approaches on organic vs. paid search

Moving form above the fold:
22%+ lift over control

**Adding brochure call-to-action**: 31% lift over control

**Adding brochure language + a full-width form**: 33% lift over control
Foster Real-Time Connections

Tip #4: Embrace Webinars

- Webinar types: info sessions, app workshops, new student
- Send recording to registrants
- **Advanced**: Provide attendance incentive (app fee waiver)
- **Advanced**: Track attendance and customize follow up outreach

**Best time to host**: 2 pm ET

**Best way to achieve high attendance**: Send a reminder 15 minutes before session starts

**Best co-presenters**: Current online students (make sure to send a thank you gift for participating!)
Communicate Online Expertise

Tip #5: Develop Online-Specific FAQ Pages

- Develop content to help new students understand university resources
- Advanced: Designate online student liaisons in key university departments
- Advanced: Allow prospects to preview an online course

“Registration was blocked because I had to get an MMR vaccination. Why is this a requirement for online-only students?”

“Registration website is extremely cumbersome.”

“It is difficult to know what courses are available to online students. That makes filling out a Plan of Study very difficult.”
Allocate Your Resources

Tip #6: Use Data to Prioritize

- Explore solutions (CRMs) that track inquiry sources and evaluate effort and cost
- **Advanced**: Review configuration of existing CRM to track effort and cost

Some of All Campus’ KPIs include:

- Prioritization of high interest students
- Yield metrics from app start to enrollment
- Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)
- Google Analytics content tracking
Communicate Strategically and Frequently

Tip #7: Create an Email Plan

- Keep prospects engaged through email communication
- Map out an email campaign that includes 5 - 10 emails
- **Advanced**: Tailor automated emails to specific audiences
- **Advanced**: A/B test subject lines

Typical decision timeline for master’s degree programs from first point of contact to enrollment: 12 - 18 months

Many applicants engage with automated emails **before** extensively consuming website content or connecting with an enrollment advisor.
Make Decisions and Communicate Quickly

Tip #8: Accelerate Turnaround Times

- 10 business days from completed application to decision
- Implement rolling admissions
- Convene smaller review committees
- Waive or eliminate standardized tests
- Advanced: 5 day decision timeline

10%+ decrease in show rate Y-O-Y when delays in app review occur

Average review committee size: 3 reviewers

Introducing a GMAT waiver process at a top business program led to:

- More women
- More diversity
- Equally high retention
Make Decisions Driven By Market Data

Tip 10: Benchmark Competitors and Analyze Supply/Demand Regularly

- Use free tools to get insight into market (Google Keyword Planner, IPEDS)
- Review peer program websites, marketing materials, curriculum and admissions reqs
- Advanced: Secret shop similar programs

Changing a program name from “MS in Internet Technology” to “MS in Information Technology” resulted in a **66% increase** in apps started and a **64% increase** in new student starts year over year. Recommendation was informed by:

- Competitive landscape
- Google Keyword data
- Coursework and specialization assessment
Foster Collective Ownership

Tip #10: Review and incorporate program feedback

- Debrief after each recruiting cycle to discuss concerns/objections surfaced by applicants
- **Advanced**: Survey newly admitted and admitted but declined students

Most Frequently Heard Objections from Prospects:

- **Cost** → calibrate to market and rankings
- **Time to complete** → provide flexibility to accelerate or decelerate
- **Coursework** → Provide broad range of online courses
Summary

● Add chat functionality
● Send a welcome gift
● Consider your RFI approach
● Embrace webinars
● Develop online delivery-specific FAQ pages
● Use data to prioritize resources
● Create an email plan
● Accelerate turnaround times
● Benchmark competitors and analyze supply/demand regularly
● Review and incorporate program feedback

Questions?