

ARTICLE



Proven Methods to Increase Your Inquiry Pool Now

Now is optimal time to start looking at your next year's inquiry pool to make sure you have the right number and mix of inquirers for to successfully build your next applicant pool. If your inquiry pool is less than optimal, consider the following proven strategies to ensure future enrollment success.

BUY EARLY AND OFTEN

Throughout the year, plan on buying search names as they become available. Many schools do a one-time buy, thereby missing out on the opportunity to continually build their inquiry pool. In addition, you might consider purchasing from multiple list vendors, such as NRCCUA, College Board, and ACT. Students don't all take the same tests. So by using multiple list vendors, you can get a deeper penetration into your target markets.

Along with buying names throughout the year, you want to be first-on-the-block with your search messaging. Clients consistently report higher response rates with early search campaigns.

CONSIDER A SECOND-CHANCE SEARCH

Perhaps when you conducted your initial inquiry search campaign, many students may not have been ready to explore their college options or had too many other universities competing for their attention. You may find that now is actually a great time to engage non-responders and entice them to inquire.

When re-searching a student list, be sure to use new, compelling reasons to get them to inquire—whether it be to find out about an early scholarship offer, invite them to a campus event or open house, or receive a material that may guide them in their selection process.



It is critical to get important information into prospective students hands while they are most interested, which is right after they have inquired.

GET A FRIENDLY COMMUNICATION PLAN AUDIT

Though to many of you the idea of having an audit may seem on par with going to the dentist, it is actually a rather painless and informative process that can help you dramatically increase your inquiry numbers and quality. It is imperative your communications flow encourages students to inquire and visit campus. Highachieving admissions staffs are tuning up their fall communications right now.

COMPEL STEALTH INQUIRERS TO IDENTIFY

We've all experienced the recent increase in stealth inquirers — students who don't make themselves known until they apply for admission, and there is no indication that they are going away anytime soon. So, it is critical to create reasons to compel them to make themselves visible to you.

Consider prominently placing your inquiry form on the home page, offering something of value to entice them to identify themselves by inquiring or applying, invite them to visit you on Facebook or other forms of social media as they may be more comfortable engaging there than by completing a form.

EMBRACE SOCIAL MEDIA

While email remains a powerful way to reach prospective students, social media are contemporary students' preferred methods of communication with each other. Thus, as recruiters, we need to find effective ways to engage them on their playing field. From mobile phones to Facebook, social media can be harnessed as tools to encourage inquiries, visits, and applications.

Make your communications social-media savvy by creating mobile-friendly copy and responsive design. Engage students on Facebook with compelling newsletters, a nohassle inquiry form, and a virtual campus store. Get beyond the idea that all students need to inquire. If you can engage them through your Facebook page, you can encourage them to inquire, visit, and apply.

COMMIT TO FAST, ACTION-ORIENTED FULFILLMENT

It is critical to get important university information into prospective students hands while they are most interested, which is right after they have inquired. Many schools are slow at providing the first communication to a new inquirer. First, it may take a few weeks to input the inquirers contact information into the institutional database. Once in the system, responses are often sent in batch using bulk postage, easily delaying delivery by several additional weeks. But consider this: If you contacted a company about buying a \$30,000 product, and it took the company a month or more to send you a brochure about it, would you still be interested?

Your fulfillment not only has to be fast, but it also needs to compel the inquirer to take the next steps of visiting and applying. So, your messaging should be geared towards engaging the student with personalized information specifically geared to his or her interests. Many schools just don't have the staff,



the facilities, or the technology to provide timely responses to new inquirers. If this is the case at your institution, you should seriously consider using an outside firm for fulfillment.

TRACK AND ANALYZE RESULTS

It is not enough to send out persuasive and appealing search campaigns. Once the e-mail or print piece has reached potential students, the time for tracking and analysis begins. You want to keep a close eye on the performance of your messages. Valuable insights on campaign effectiveness can be gained from monitoring and analyzing your e-mail performance data, such as: open, deliverability, and response rates. With print you could monitor any spikes in calls for information, inquiries, or campus visits—depending on the print message.

You should also be sure to track and analyze landing page performance with methods including multivariate or A/B testing. A/B testing allows you to split your audience and direct them to view different landing pages. A/B testing one of the most effective ways to learn more about your prospective students, but it is often underutilized in admissions since it is incorrectly thought to be highly technical and difficult to implement. Using A/B testing, you can measure the effectiveness of messaging, design, and images to help determine which are most effective in generating inquires, campus visits and applications.

Looking for more strategies and services to increase your inquiry pool? Contact KelmscottEDU today!



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathleen Cross, Ph.D. serves as Executive Vice President of KelmscottEDU, a nationally recognized higher education enrollment consulting and marketing firm, where she leads consulting, strategy, and marketing. With experience working in both U.S. and international universities, Kathleen is a former Vice President of Enrollment, Chief Technology Officer, and Dean of Studies Abroad.

Serving 500+ higher education institutions over the years, Kathleen's approach is to create authentic experiences that engage and inspire the audience combined with innovative and proven data-driven strategy.

Kathleen holds a doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration from Saint Louis University along with a bachelor's degree from Saint Louis University and master's degrees from the University of Cincinnati and California State University. Kathleen also serves as a professor in the Higher Education Administration Graduate Program at Bay Path University. She is a frequent national speaker and published author.

She has additional experience in corporate and healthcare organizations as a former bilingual Speech-Language Pathologist and former director and part-owner of successful medical device/technology company. She has lived in several countries and fluent or proficient in multiple languages.

ABOUT KELMSCOTTEDU

KelmscottEDU is a privately owned, full-service communications and marketing solutions provider for the higher education market. Founded in 1936, our headquarters houses, a team of enrollment and marketing strategy experts, an award-winning graphic design and copywriting department, an e-business technology center, sophisticated printing operations, and mail and fulfillment operations—assuring you quality control, lower costs and fast, effective results.

Comprehensive Enrollment Management Solutions

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 - Printing, Mailing & Fulfillment
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- And more

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