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The Ultimate Checklist For Navigating Effective Student Search Campaigns

When thinking about navigation, the culture that most readily comes to mind is that of the Greeks who mastered navigation and developed the modern shipping industry. For centuries the Greeks have understood that a successful voyage takes careful planning, review of conditions and charts, and a seaworthy vessel. Taking a cue from the Greek mariner's log, we can find many insights applicable to today's student search campaigns.

Experienced Greek sailors know that they must be constantly adjusting to the changing environmental conditions to reach their destination. Much like sailors, the successful enrollment professional must also adjust course and change direction to respond to the shifting tides of student preferences and behaviors.

With today's increased competition for smaller numbers of traditional collegebound students, it more critical than ever to be well prepared to create effective student search campaigns that yield the right mix and number of students. A strong student search requires three key elements: data, planning, and a great partner.

In order to focus this year's student search, you should start by analyzing and understanding last year's search results and then make adjustments and refinements to this year's search where needed. This first checklist is designed to help you identify major elements that you should review in your last year's search campaigns.

ANALYZE PRIOR YEAR SEARCH RESULTS

- Examine the number of responses per message
- Track the number of opens and click-throughs per message
- Note how early you launched your search after the list of names was available
- Determine which messages were most and least effective



- Look at response rates by primary and secondary markets
- Consider patterns of students who responded by a paper or electronic component of your search
- Analyze how much duplication you had across list sources
- Study response rates by gender, major, etc. for trends
- Determine if you bought the right names and the right number of names

Next, you need to analyze your new first-year class for data and trends that can guide you to develop better future campaigns. Pay particular attention to how your last year's search campaign impacted the quality, demographics, and size of this class. Also, note whether enrolled students from search lists had inquired/ applied or were secret shoppers. A large percentage of secret shoppers (enrolled students who were non-responders to your search campaigns) may be an indication that you need to develop more compelling and effective search campaigns.

STUDY THIS YEAR'S ENROLLED STUDENT DATA

- Determine the number and percentage of students who came from your search list
- Study enrolled student patterns by search list source
- Examine average SAT/ACT scores of search respondents who enrolled
- Determine the number of enrolled students who were on your search list but did not respond to your search campaigns (secret shoppers)
- Look for geographic patterns in search respondents who enrolled
- Explore enrolled student class by major, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- Track your enrolled search responders by the type of campaign they came from (sophomore, junior or senior search)

Finally, with past search and enrolled student data in hand, select the right partner who can work with your institution to develop and launch effective search campaigns. The following list outlines key services that a cutting edge search provider should offer. And, by the way, KelmscottEDU offers all these services and benefit—and more.

IDENTIFY YOUR PERFECT SEARCH PARTNER

- Deep level of personalization and customization
- Strategy development by seasoned enrollment experts
- In-house award winning design and copywriting
- Strategically segmented messaging
- Comprehensive data dashboard available to you 24/7
- PURLs, pre-populated applications, and inquiry forms
- Responsive design for today's social media savvy students
- Parent engagement strategies
- Fast, effective launch
- Employs best practices in student search



- In-house printing and print and electronic fulfillment
- Printing on demand and variable printing
- Ongoing and end-of-campaign analysis
- Loyal customer base
- Reputation as a low cost leader in search

Armed with data derived from these checklists, you will be able to chart effective plans for this year's student search. Working with KelmscottEDU, you will have a partner who will help you create an effective and personalized search campaign and take care of all your logistics so that this year's search will be smooth sailing.



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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

- Slate Print
- Search 365—Year-Round Search Solution
- Award-winning Creative Services
—Branding, Strategy, Copy & Design
- Recruitment Calling Campaigns
- Admission Team Training
- Enrollment Communication Consulting Services
- Mobile & Print Publications
- Video Services
- Digital Marketing
- Yield & Melt Reduction Campaigns
- Printing, Mailing & Fulfillment
- College Promotional Products & Signage
—And more

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