

A photograph of three young adults sitting on a concrete bench outdoors. A woman with long, wavy hair and glasses is in the center, smiling and looking at a smartphone. To her left, another woman with long brown hair is looking towards her. To her right, a man with glasses and a blue t-shirt is looking at the phone with a thoughtful expression. The background shows a building with a wooden slat facade. A semi-transparent green and blue graphic overlay is present in the lower half of the image.

A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVELY MARKETING TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS



Introduction

Due to decreasing student application numbers, colleges and universities need to market themselves in many new ways in order to attract applicants. You now need to look beyond the traditional demographic to appeal to first-generation students, mature students and International students.

What should you be focussing on?

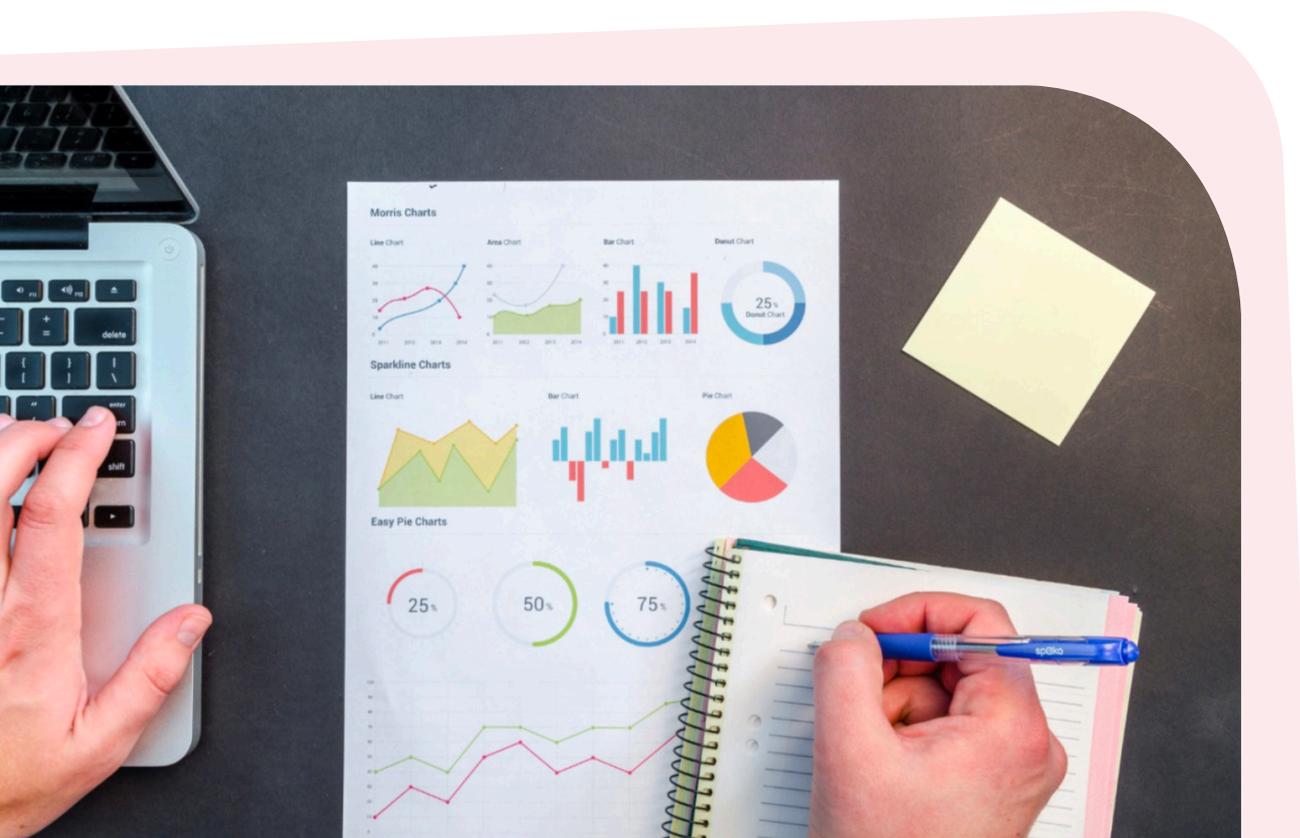
TOP TIPS...

1 Know and understand your data

This concept isn't new to any seasoned marketing team but the process of capturing and interpreting data is rapidly becoming the main priority for higher and further education establishments. Of course, simply obtaining data isn't enough. There are plenty of data providers who are more than willing to supply you with multiple pages of information that they have captured and will charge you for them. This isn't what you need. Understanding the wider picture is helpful but what should be most important to you is understanding YOUR data.

What are the questions that are important to your campus and what do you need to know to improve on your student experiences?

Knowing what questions you need to ask (of both your campus and your students), knowing where to look to find the answers to those questions and being able to understand the information that you gather is key to building a successful marketing strategy. Having the right tools and systems in place that allow you to understand student behaviour and experiences is crucial to identifying the key promotional points of your campus. You need to be able to fully capture and deliver the student experience in order to understand what and how you are promoting your campus to your prospective students.



2

Promote your Campus

Some universities and colleges are marketing themselves to prospective students by advertising incentives such as electrical gadgets or cash inducements. Many universities and colleges are aware that longer term success lies in promoting a credible reputation (brand image) and have recruited marketing professionals from the corporate world, including CMOs, to invest significant time and money into creating strong institutional brands.

An area of substantial growth within those CMO's marketing plans is within the digital space, yet despite increased digital activity it is still believed that the most effective marketing strategy for universities and colleges are events based and involve direct interaction with prospective students.

Creating and promoting your campus identity and ensuring that prospective students relate to your message means you are required to execute these messages well through both online and online activities. You need to ensure that you deliver a student experience that's expected and one that you fully understand and are currently delivering to existing students.



3 Understand your student's needs

Completing a college course or university degree requires a significant investment of time, money and energy. The ever-increasing demands of the workplace have made qualifications imperative for anybody who wants to achieve a successful career. This increasing need over desire coupled with the conscious significance of the investment required means prospective students (your customers) are driving changes to include more options and flexibility.

Expanding educational offerings, satellite campuses, online courses and non-traditional programmes are all obvious examples of changes implemented in a bid to attract new students. How often do you evaluate whether the measures you have in place address the needs of the student body you have, or more importantly want to have?

Interaction is key to increasing satisfaction levels and gathering the feedback and desires of both existing and prospective students.

This is critical to ensuring your campus is delivering everything that your prospective student expects in today's modern world. Ensure you have adequate tools for capturing feedback and engaging directly with the feedback provider. It is only by having resources capable of this that you can maintain a competitive edge in the applicant marketplace.



4 Maximise your open day experience

It's an age old saying that first impressions count. Ensuring your visiting prospects experience the rich branding that you have spent time and money on is important but more crucial still is ensuring that there is a consistency in the customer experience delivery. This includes the first observations online, registering at an open day and continues through to enrolling at the establishment and beyond.

Traditionally the focus has been on securing a person's interest online and then investing time and effort into delivering an engaging open day experience as a separate matter.

The establishments that achieve the greatest success capture the prospect's interest online and then continue to engage with the individual at each critical stage of that students enrolment and advancement.

This can be achieved by combining the digital world with the physical environment and ensuring that the open day fully represents the campus life experience that the prospective student has visited to learn.

The open day experience that you deliver needs to be tailored to each individual, offering only the information that is relevant at that time and ensuring that the prospective student is not overwhelmed or presented with confusing material such as irrelevant course information or topics that are not of interest.

This can be achieved in a number of ways. A noticeable trend in today's students is the desire to have specific information available instantaneously from their smartphones. Whilst exploring unfamiliar territory, having relevant maps and timetables available digitally from the palm of the hand will become obligatory as opposed to desired as open day experiences increase in importance. This solution achieves the digital/physical environment integration that has proven to be successful for recruitment.

5 Promote from within

To comprehend what elements of campus life to promote, it is imperative that you appreciate what appeals to your existing population.

Understanding the interests, behaviours and actions of individuals and engaging students in an interactive and personalised manner results in obtaining information that helps you to build a picture on what resonates with existing students and therefore what would be appealing to new ones.

Using current student experiences and advocacy in your promotions adds credibility to your claims and will also act as a 'check' that what you are saying is actually true.

Understanding the various types and entry points of prospective students will help you shape your customer advocacy requirements. Create case studies in both pictorial and written form and ensure they are visible to the right target visitor at the right time with visibility being both online and offline.

As paying customers, students are increasingly demanding of personalised services and as competition increases, academic institutions need to be more responsive than ever to this demand.



Thank you

myday is a complete digital campus. A portal and mobile app solution that improves student engagement, satisfaction & results, supporting the whole student lifecycle.

The myday digital campus software addresses all of the considerations listed within this guide and much more.

Learn more about myday at
www.myday.co.uk

If you would like to talk to one of our advisors today about any of the information included in this guide or how myday can instantly boost your open day experience, and then continue to deliver the rich experience you aspire to achieve then

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