

NACCAP Leadership Conference

Best Practices in Student Recruiting

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SCANNELL & KURZ, INC.

Guided by data, driven by service

- We are a data-driven enrollment management consulting firm providing:
 - Organizational and operational reviews of enrollment-related offices
 - Development of pricing and financial aid strategies using predictive modeling and simulation tools
 - Advice and counsel regarding recruitment programs and strategies
 - Retention analysis and best practice reviews
 - SKORE: An enrollment management data warehouse & reporting tool
 - FAST: Financial Aid Strategy Tool
- Our mission is to help our clients achieve their enrollment goals including increased net tuition revenue, improvements in the quality profile, better retention and graduation rates, and increases in the enrollment of targeted subpopulations.

New Agenda for Successful Recruitment

- Recruitment
 - The Past and The Future
 - Best Practices in Recruitment
 - What messages need to go?
 - What messages have to be heard?
 - Conclusions

Recruitment: The Past

- Could focus almost entirely on seniors
- Could control the process
- Could wait until admit stage to talk about cost and affordability
- Could be certain that a high percentage of campus visitors would enroll
- Could forgo building a relationship with each applicant
- Could count on the financial aid office to explain the award letter

Recruitment: The Past

- Could count on most students who deposit enrolling
- Could expect virtually everyone attending orientation to enroll
- Could expect roughly the same conversion rates from inquiry to applicant; applicant to completed applicant; admit to deposit; and deposit to enroll.
- Could treat transfers as an afterthought

Recruitment: The Past

- Could assume admissions alone can meet new student enrollment goals
- Could be successful without engaging faculty in recruitment
- Could not have to depend on athletics to help meet enrollment goals
- Could afford not to be concerned about campus life

Recruitment: The Future

- Needs to be multi-year
- Needs to be multi-media – especially social networking
- Needs to be more proactive in spite of “stealth applications”: or stated another way, you need to remain aggressive even though you can’t control the process
- Need to lead with messages of value and affordability early in the cycle

Recruitment: The Future

- Need to provide multiple opportunities to engage with the campus community – on campus and off campus (including alumni and parents)
- Needs to be “high touch” – personalized
- Need to be trained to not only make the case for affordability, but be able to explain the award letter to parents
- Need to recruit continuously right up to the first day of class

Recruitment: The Future

- Need to use data on most recent conversion rates to set goals and monitor those rates routinely to make mid-course adjustments
- Need to recruit admitted students who chose to enroll in a community college beginning immediately, in the fall of their first year – using National Student Clearinghouse StudentTracker reports
- Need to treat transfers as a top recruitment priority
- Need to understand who stays and who leaves after the first year as that will impact your future recruitment strategies

Recruitment: The Future

- Need to understand reasons for leaving after the first year and make sure admissions is “plugged into” retention research and intervention strategies – you’ll have a lot to contribute
- Need to have the faculty as fully engaged partners in recruitment
- Need to see the athletic department as a major source of new students and collaborate to be sure their rosters are full.

How Do You Approach the Marketplace?

- Early and Often!
 - Need to be engaged with prospects qualifying their level of interest in your school and understanding their preferences and goals in order to begin an informed, customized conversation.
 - Don't adhere rigidly to the traditional "funnel". It no longer represents how the cycle works for all students because the funnel is now at least in part digital.

Best Practices in Recruitment

- Target limited recruitment resources using data
 - Defining primary, secondary, and tertiary markets for different levels of attention
 - Using a common definition of “hot prospects” for additional, personalized outreach
 - Continuously improving campus visits based on survey feedback and increased probability of enrollment of visitors
 - Setting territorial goals based on historical conversion rates

Best Practices in Recruitment

- Remember that, even with the advent of the web, it is still about building relationships
 - Train recruiters to effectively deliver key messages about value, affordability, and return on investment (ROI)
 - Set expectations for personal contact with hot prospects and key guidance counselors
 - Make sure the communication stream is customized to student interests (“mass customization”)
 - Invest in a top-notch tour program and continuously improve it.

Best Practices in Recruitment

- Engage the broader community —admissions can't do it alone
 - Faculty
 - Alumni
 - Students

Remember, managing volunteers is not a free good.

Best Practices in Recruitment

- Do's and don'ts of volunteer management

Do's

- Start small
- Provide job descriptions
- Use feedback loops
- Offer reward & recognition

Don'ts

- Use volunteers at wrong time (faculty ≠ cold call)
- Expect a return if you haven't invested
- Assign it to inexperienced staff

Best Practices in Recruitment

- Don't forget about transfers – Part of your traditional freshman market has enrolled first in a low cost community college. Don't lose them twice.

Best Practices in Recruitment

- Communicate to and recruit parents deliberately and intentionally (as well as grandparents) because they're paying the bill.

Other Best Recruitment Practices

- Website is your institution's most impactful and deliberate marketing tool – top priority for resources and continuous improvement
- Nevertheless can't eliminate print entirely
 - Postcards that parents can see
 - Spark interest to drive them to web
 - Print communication needs to be timed and messaged consistent with and in support of digital media
- Ensure adequate staffing and training/development of recruiters even in midst of institutional budget cuts

Other Best Recruitment Practices

- More important to have a “balanced” sales force: seasoned veterans, young professionals, and rookies, than a group comprised mostly of eager, but green, young alumni.
- Hold admissions and financial aid responsible for net tuition revenue (NTR) goals, for new students.
- If NCAA DIII make sure athletics is optimally contributing to new student enrollment and retention goals.
- Today’s applications are yesterday’s inquiries. Tracking metrics should begin at the inquiry stage and then focus on completed applications and visits to campus pre-matriculation.

Messages That Need To Go

- Any message that doesn't differentiate your institution in a crowded marketplace
- Hollow messages:
 - “We're affordable” – without proof statements supported with data
 - “Hands-on experience” – again with no proof statements based on data
 - “Our graduates are successful” – without proof
 - Marketing images that are not integrated with the rest of campus

Messages That Need To Be Heard

- Ones that differentiate NACCAP schools from other sectors (with whom you compete)
- What is your brand promise?
 - Academic Quality – selectivity
 - Academic Quality – faculty research
 - Big time sports
 - Endowment
 - Convenience
 - Co-branding (e.g., Denomination)
 - Education of the “whole” person
- For most NACCAP schools only the last two are realistic and appropriate

Messages That Need To Be Heard

- So how do you differentiate from each other?
 - Size
 - Delivery mode
 - Specific academic programs
 - What your graduates do
 - Co-curricular opportunities
 - “Rite of passage” experiences

Conclusion

- In this “buyers” market you need to reach out and find your “customer”. You need to be able to prove your value and your affordability. You need to develop a relationship with the family as well as the student. To do all of this efficiently and effectively, you need to be data-driven and use technology as a primary recruitment tool.

Questions?

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