



REMARKABLE INSIGHTS  
ACTIONABLE TOPICS

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VOL. 1, ISSUE 1 2017



INSIDE

**How and Why  
Students Select  
an Institution**

Does Direct Mail  
Make Sense?

**5** Stages of SEM  
Office Evolution

# Letter from the President



We pride ourselves in supporting you in your everyday work journey, your quest for work/life balance, and the development of your rising superstars.



enrollmentFUEL would like to extend our gratitude to **Clarke University**, a microSEARCH™ client, for their contribution to the cover of our magazine. If your institution wants to be highlighted on the next cover of Octane, let us know.

**Octane the Magazine:**  
**A Publication of enrollmentFUEL**

A collection of innovative thoughts from a team of people bonded to clients and a way to prevent the knocking that comes with the "one size fits all" search strategies. Adding Octane to your thinking fuels creativity and releases positive energy among enrollment professionals.

Dear Octane Booster:

Welcome to enrollmentFUEL's first edition of *Octane*, a magazine designed for enrollment management leaders like you who want quick, up-to-date information in bite-sized articles. When we set out to develop *Octane*, our goal was to create something fresh and new that would excite enrollment professionals and get them pumped.

The field of enrollment management—particularly Student Search—continues to evolve, and that makes your job challenging. At enrollmentFUEL, we pride ourselves in supporting you in your everyday work journey, your quest for work/life balance, and the development of your rising superstars. While we are committed to being the best Student Search company in the industry, we know our success is built on yours, and the professional development of your team is the golden ticket.

In this issue, you will find stories touching on many topics ranging from how students decide on colleges to how our sense of touch impacts the development and use of marketing pieces. We developed our topics to provide you with timely, relevant information to help guide you as decisions are made about the future of your enrollment strategy. If you have any ideas for topics, we would love to hear from you, and our contact information is on the back panel.

Let's keep that Octane pumping—we have classes to bring in!

Yours in Partnership,

Jacquelyn D. Elliott, Ed.D.  
President

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## 5 REASONS

### TO USE A MICROSEARCH™ CAMPAIGN

Run a quick A/B test	Test a BIG IDEA	Find students to fill a specific program	Enter a new market	Target a niche
1	2	3	4	5



# How and Why College Students Select an Institution

An Examination of Decision-Making Theory in College Recruiting

By Dr. Jacquelyn D. Elliott  
President, enrollmentFUEL

I recently went to dinner with a friend of mine. The dinner was fabulous, the company even better, but the decision-making process of where to go was painful. We have all been there; I am certain of it. "Where would you like to eat?" "Oh, I don't know; how about you?" "I don't care; you tell me." Sound familiar? Some decisions like where to eat are easy to solve, while others, like what to do in the case of landing an airplane in distress are difficult beyond imagination. In this article, we will learn about decision-making theory, how it impacts us, how college-bound students ultimately decide on which college to attend, and ways that enrollment professionals can help to impact that decision.

Why and how we make decisions has long been a subject of research and debate. Decision theory is the analysis of the behavior of an individual facing nonstrategic

uncertainty—that is, the uncertainty that is due to what we term *nature*.<sup>1</sup> Ever since the ancient Greeks, assumptions have revolved around a single theme: humans are rational.<sup>2</sup> It is assumed that as we make decisions, we consciously analyze the alternatives and carefully weigh the pros and cons.<sup>3</sup> As far back as Descartes and Plato, this *rational being* theory was what defined us as humans, became the foundation for modern economics and started a wave of cognitive science research. But, guess what? The theory of human rationality is wrong—it simply isn't how our brains work.<sup>4</sup>

Surprisingly, after years of research, we have come to know that the mind is composed of an intricate web of synapses, many of which are involved with the production of *emotion*. Whenever someone makes a decision, the brain is "awash in feeling, driven by its inexplicable passions."<sup>5</sup> As a result, our decision making is

often conceived in the heart of the moment. It is an immediate or gut reaction to the event that we are experiencing. Other research has also shown that our environment plays a role in our decision-making process. For example, Etzioni<sup>6</sup> points out that often, people make decisions based on how they are supposed to behave in the paradigm of human relationships—or, simply, they do what is expected of them.

Therefore, how does this impact the students with whom we work every day, as we try to recruit them and encourage their decision to attend our institution? Castelman et al<sup>7</sup> examine one factor that helps answer this question—cost-benefit theory. As professionals in the field, we have long used this theory to drive many of our communication strategies with families. What we often forget is that cost conscientious, and first-generation students can be overwhelmed by the expense, even though the benefits of an

*continued on next page*



education could be life changing.<sup>8</sup> In this case, emotion usurps rationality. Savvy enrollment leaders attempt to overcome this as they create award matrices, provide early scholarship estimates, and send letters outlining how to make education affordable at their institution. We cannot deny that cost is a critically important *rational* factor. However, the key to balancing that with other considerations is by impacting *emotion*. We do all of this in an effort to impact the emotional decision-making which students and families experience as they process the cost of college.

Part of what also makes emotion so vivid in the decision-making process is the role that a student's environment plays. Parents, peer networks, high school culture, family lifestyle and ethnic/cultural expectations all contribute to whether or not a student feels that a particular college or university is the right fit. Understanding these aspects, professionals employ marketing strategies to engage individuals who impress upon students where they should attend college. We design parent mailings, create communities where students can see others like them who have selected to attend, visit guidance counselors and high schools, and hold social events (think yield parties) where the entire family is engaged in order to help guide a student in their decision.

To further aid enrollment professionals, major higher education research and surveys abound outlining the top reasons why students select a college. The top five reasons,

as reported by *U.S. News and World Report*<sup>9</sup> are:

- College has a very good academic reputation
- The college's graduates get good jobs
- The financial package
- The cost of attendance
- A visit to the campus

Clearly, these are all surveys that ask students what impacts their decision in a *static*, rational way.

Let's examine a story. Remember when I said in the opening of the article that some decisions are harder than others, like when a pilot has to land a plane in distress? This story is important. It is important because it gives some insight into how we make decisions in the *moment*. From 1940 to 1990, the aviation industry held steady at

65% of plane crashes being the responsibility of pilot error<sup>10</sup>. All of this was in the face of aviation reforms, mandatory pilot layovers and increased classroom training. In 1990, something happened—something changed. The percentage of crashes due to pilot mistake began to decline rapidly. According to statistics at the time of the study, it dropped to around

30%.<sup>11</sup> What caused this significant shift? There were two things. First, realistic flight simulators. The second factor was Cockpit Resource Management (CRM). CRM takes the sole responsibility of decision-making out of the hands of the pilot, and instead, involves the entire crew working to solve problems as a team. Decisions made in

**We cannot deny that cost is a critically important rational factor, but the key is we attempt to overcome that by impacting *emotion*.**

**The top five reasons why students select a college, as reported by *U.S. News and World Report* (2015) are:**



COLLEGE HAS A VERY GOOD ACADEMIC REPUTATION



THE COLLEGE'S GRADUATES GET GOOD JOBS



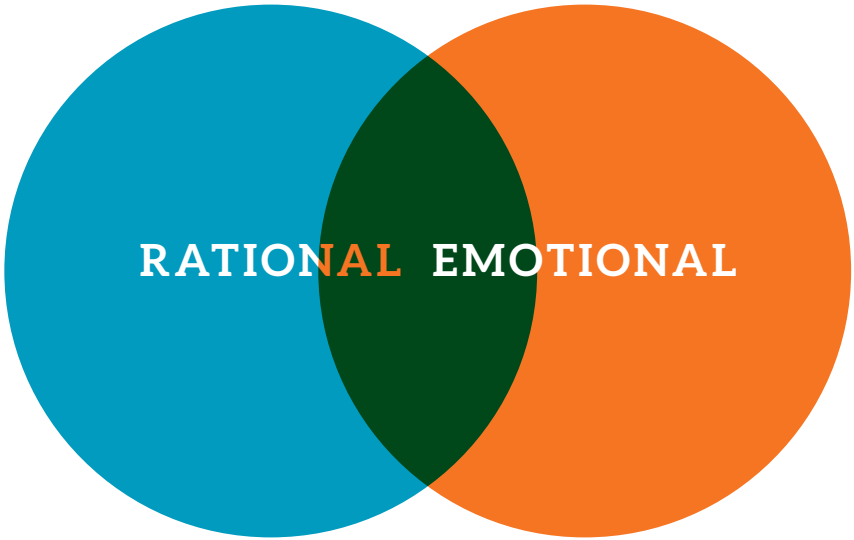
THE FINANCIAL PACKAGE



THE COST OF ATTENDANCE



A VISIT TO THE CAMPUS



the actual moment are better constructed for success under two circumstances—being placed in a situation to practice decision making and having other people involved in the process.

How does this help us recruit students and assist them to decide which college to attend? We need to combine what we know about the *static* and *rational* decision-making factors with dynamic moments where emotion plays a factor. Castleman et al.<sup>12</sup> point out that “adolescents are highly responsive to immediate and enticing stimuli...and cognitively less capable of undertaking the type of careful reasoning that is often essential to get to college.” Therefore, we must create these moments with enticing stimuli. We can do this in a few ways. Remember that people recruit people. Students make decisions based on what is expected of them and have a team of people guiding them as they decide. This is where admission counselor training is imperative. Counselors often miss the mark of truly understanding the impact they have on a student's

decision to attend. They are not skilled at setting up the expectation that the student *will* attend their institution. Counselors have multiple opportunities to create moments where students can respond with emotion, such as remembering their birthday, sending something special in the mail that is specifically tailored to that student, or creating a truly memorable campus visit experience. Probably the best way to create an emotional moment is during the campus visit.

It is important that in the messaging and marketing of an institution, the campus visit is highlighted from the very beginning during the Student Search process. Landing pages should incorporate an active ask for a campus visit in a fun and engaging way. We know that the complex information a student must sort through seems like a rational decision-making process, and in some cases, that is true. However, in most situations, students make a decision about where to attend college based on *emotion*. They say the campus “just felt right.” Or, “I just knew it was the place for me when I stepped on campus.”

While deciding which college to attend isn't as simple as deciding where to eat, in many ways, the outcome is the same. At the end of the process—after sorting through all of the options presented—we decide with our gut what will satiate our appetite. We go for what makes us happy and fulfills our desires. Ultimately, at the end of the day, we want to exit the process feeling good about our decision, and that isn't done with a rational brain. It is our emotional self that makes that decision.

When my friend and I finally decided where we were going to eat, he said, “Well, what are you craving?” That is how we picked where we went to eat. As enrollment professionals, our jobs are to help students identify what it is they crave and align our campus visits, communications flow, and relationship building around these emotional moments.

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11. Lehrer, *How we*, xv.  
12. Castleman, *Prompts, personalization*, 10





# Retargeting Ramps Up

Enrollment professionals have long been skilled at reengaging students through multiple platforms to include telecounseling, direct mail, and repeat high school visits. With continuing advances in technology, we have to be equally savvy about our digital endeavors—to include ramping up our retargeting efforts.

Retargeting is a direct response marketing tactic that keeps you in front of potential students. It targets individuals who have previously expressed interest in your school, online or off, and exposes them to additional display advertising messages. These could include email *opens*, landing page *abandons*, and website *visits*.

Retargeting relies on the use of tracking tags, also known as tracking pixels. A small piece of JavaScript code is embedded within the source code for a web page. When someone visits your website, the tracking tag places an anonymous cookie in their browser.

The cookie captures anonymous data such as IP addresses, type of web browser, and how the visitor was referred to the site (search, click-through from an ad, etc.), along with on-site behaviors. No personal information about the visitor is collected.

Once the visitor leaves, the cookie allows you the opportunity to display additional ads on their device. Re-exposure through advertising keeps your school top-of-mind and can prompt students to take the next step.

There are many different types of retargeting opportunities:

- Site retargeting directing visitors to a website
- Email retargeting focusing on people who open an email
- CRM or list retargeting allowing you to target pre-identified contacts
- Search retargeting where ads are tied to search criteria
- Contextual retargeting with ad content correlated to viewed content



When designing a retargeting campaign, it's important to include a frequency cap and a burn code. A **frequency cap** restricts the number of times that a potential student is shown ads within a defined time frame. A **burn code** identifies respondents who have taken a specific action such as requesting information, so they are no longer served ads.

Two other best practices for retargeting campaigns are A-B testing and creative ad rotation. **A-B testing** identifies what works best, and **creative ad rotation** ensures that your audience does not get tired of seeing your ads.

**Patrick Blanchard**, Principal of Full View Marketing in Atlanta, Georgia, says that your plan must be adaptive.

"Each market is a bit different, and we tend to get different results from different platforms—whether display ads or social media. These campaigns should integrate with your entire strategy and be supported by research, and then a pause to evaluate what is going on."

He also suggests being wary of vendors who attempt to sell you volume. "It's not about impressions. It's about finding where eyes are and being on those platforms."

If you are wanting to ramp up your enrollment strategy, look at your coming year and identify how retargeting and display advertising can help you achieve your goals.



# Boundless Organizations



During our travels across the wide landscape of U.S. higher education, we have seen many different types of admission teams. Some teams are clearly more effective than others. Not surprisingly, there is an obvious correlation between the effectiveness of the leader and his or her team. When leaders are not effective, they stifle the organization by placing a lid on the team's abilities. When this lid is raised or removed, the possibilities for an organization to flourish are boundless.

The enrollmentFUEL staff recently started to observe organizational attributes within admission offices. We realized that they created a spectrum of behaviors that were easily clustered into descriptive categories. These categories were then compared against those institutions setting record enrollments. What quickly became apparent, in almost every situation, was that leaders largely determine a team's success.

Our qualitative description of these five stages is shown below, ranging from the **frenzied** to the **multipliers**. There seems to be a continuum or hierarchy, that may remind you of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, or in a more contemporary schema, that of Lencioni's *Five Dysfunctions of Teams*. You will note that there is a strong correlation to Maslow's theory, but only a visual similarity to Lencioni's paradigm. As with Maslow's theory, the five stages of an enrollment office can be divided into deficiency needs and growth needs, whereby the lower needs are met before progressing through the stages. What is equally interesting is that stages can be rapidly achieved or unraveled with leadership change.

### The Frenzied

In this first stage of the continuum, the frenzied enrollment leader operates in a culture of fear and doesn't feel protected. A frenzied leader leads a frenzied team. Leaders typically feel that they do not have the support of the administration.

This feeling permeates the ethos of the office resulting in chaos and staff fatigue. This enrollment leader is often led by another frenzied leader, and the entire campus culture can be in need of repair. These leaders have a hard time prioritizing, and because of their stress level, can sometimes mistake busyness with effectiveness.

### The Realizers

In an enrollment office's journey to increasing organizational effectiveness, the team must first realize that they are frenzied and need to transform. In these organizations, we sometimes find a rebel who is willing to champion change. This transformation starts with developing a plan but requires a supportive administration for the change to have an impact. These realizers frequently leave the campus before investing the requisite time and energy that successfully propels the office to the next level. It is important, at this stage, to capture this newly found energy and use it to create a wave that others want to ride. What truly impacts this stage is the number of individuals who are onboard with affecting change.

### The Believers

This is a team that has more than one realizer. Believers informally talk about things that they wish could be changed to make their team more effective. Believers are often comprised of a group of people who have been energized by attending a conference or event together. The team sometimes reaches this stage because someone new to the organization sees through a different lens and helps implement more effective operational approaches. Believers are often tenacious people who have hope, are passionate about the mission of the institution, are unwavering in their determination to get something done and have the political savvy to navigate difficult waters.

### The Ralliers

This stage requires the development of a culture that is interested, and desirous of change. Team members are energized, have been given a path to success, and the resources to get there. Ralliers personify success by co-opting others to believe, and then rally, toward aspirational benchmarks of peer institutions. A group typically hits this stage when the team can align its energy with a well-defined vision, is in pursuit of something bigger than one believer, and is inspired to revive a formerly declining office environment or morale. The majority of current enrollment teams are composed of ralliers.

### The Multipliers

These are enrollment offices that exhibit self-actualized characteristics. This team is typically comprised of individuals who thrive on developing others and have a mentoring or nurturing mindset. A hallmark of multipliers is their investment in the development of others. These offices often have a defined plan for staff members' career trajectories and a leader who intentionally advocates on their behalf. Multiplying leaders want their division to thrive and can usually convince others of its importance. Offices comprised of multipliers have directors who are capable of serving as a vice president at a struggling school and can provide immediate success. These offices have numerous rising superstars, who at any time, could leave

to take a job higher up the food chain. These offices are led by supervisors who foster and promote a culture of "up and out" and have a genuine interest in the professional growth of their staff. On the flip side, offices that are led by multipliers often maintain long-serving staff because they love their jobs and are embraced as institutional stakeholders in the team's mission. Employees are loyal because they are valued by their supervisor and consistently have meaningful opportunities to contribute—and, are rewarded accordingly.

These five stages are usually but not always incrementally obtained in succession. They are often dramatically impacted by the leader on either end of the spectrum. Feelings of despair, consciousness raising, environmental reevaluation, counter conditioning, and team liberation are the primary outcomes of each stage. While a standard bell curve is represented in this descriptive continuum, there are fewer multipliers than there are frenzied organizations.



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To help gauge where you and your team are on this continuum, please request our assessment by emailing [support@enrollmentfuel.com](mailto:support@enrollmentfuel.com). We can also make recommendations on a strategy to begin your journey along this self-improvement continuum—join the boundless.





# Does Direct Mail Make Sense?

In 2016, Harris Diamond, CEO of the McCann advertising agency spoke at the National Postal Forum. Harris said, "Today's media events are more complex than they were 100 years ago. There are many more hurdles due to fragmentation. But in a world in which people are endlessly bombarded with electronic messages, direct mail is now the most welcome houseguest."<sup>1</sup>

The instant in time when we pick up our mail and look through it has been labeled "The Mail Moment," by McCann, the agency of record for the United States Postal Office. Last year, the USPS released a major research study about our interaction with mail titled, "USPS Mail Moments, 2016 Review." The findings included:

- Overall mail engagement has increased since 2012
- Regardless of age, most consumers get their mail and sort through it at the first opportunity – an indicator that mail has value
- 47% of consumers like to discover what the mail brings every day, and consider the time they spend looking at and reading their mail as time well spent

## Mail and the Endowment Effect

One of our most commonly used expressions at enrollmentFUEL is the **mail moment**. We use it because we realize the impact that mail still has in a life that is hurried and face-paced. Think about your own day and that moment when you slow down to look at what came in your mailbox, slice open envelopes and decide what to keep and toss. In this article, we explore the actual feel of mail and how people respond. Dr. David Eagleman is a neuroscientist, author, and the creator of the PBS series, "The Brain." He studies haptics, the science of touch.

In partnership with Sappi Paper, Dr. Eagleman took a hard look at printed communications to determine how such media shapes how brands are perceived. A specific area had to do with psychological phenomena called The Endowment Effect, where people attribute higher levels of value to items and experiences when they feel a sense of ownership.

Dr. Eagleman discovered that the haptic experience of holding a piece of paper and looking at a printed image could trigger The Endowment Effect.<sup>2</sup> When potential students look at a picture of your campus on a postcard, it is a different experience than looking at the same picture on a computer screen. By involving touch, the postcard invokes the real world, prompting recipients to create more realistic imagery as they think about your school. A more accurate picture of life on campus can create the endowment effect, giving the prospective student the sense that your campus has a high degree of value, and prompting them to take the next step.

Haptics helps explain why paper catalogs are making a comeback, according to Dr. Eagleman. According to an article in the New York Times, retailer Land's End decreased the number of catalogs in 2000, and as a result, experienced a \$100 million drop in sales. By surveying online shoppers,

In humans, touch represents a powerful form of non-verbal communication. Our sense of touch plays a fundamental role in daily life, from learning about objects to communicating with other people."

— DR. DAVID EAGLEMAN

Land's End discovered that 75% of the customers who made purchases had first reviewed the catalog.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Eagleman's conclusions are supported by a joint study conducted by the Canadian postal system and True Impact Marketing, a leading neuromarketing firm. They conducted scientific experiments to determine which was more effective when it came to prompting consumers to take action—mail or digital media based on the relative impacts on the brain. When research subjects were presented with information, two techniques were used to measure the interaction. Electroencephalography (EEG) mapped the electrical activities in the brain, and eye tracking tests showed what captured the subject's attention.

The study found that our brains visually process direct mail more quickly than digital media. Mail requires less cognitive effort, elicits higher brand recall, and prompted a **20% higher motivation response**.<sup>4</sup>

## Paper versus Pixels—Comprehension Studies

Since the 1980's, there have been more than 100 studies looking at how people read on screens versus reading on paper. Ferris Jabra reviewed the research and shared the findings in a Scientific American article titled, "Why the Brain Prefers Paper."<sup>5</sup>

When it comes to comprehension and retention of information, paper wins. One reason for that appears to be that people often use a lower amount of mental effort when viewing information on a screen.

The message is static. There are no pop-ups, notifications, or hotlinks, which are generally distracting. When your direct mail piece catches the eye of a potential student, you benefit because you are more likely to get a higher level of attention.

Marketing guru Seth Godin says, "Marketing is a contest for people's attention." Mail is a medium that helps you win. The challenge for educational marketers today is understanding your audience and crafting a strategy that combines the right message, the right types of touches, and the right timing and frequency—all within your budget. Mail is tangible and touchable, and research shows the information presented on a sheet of paper often outperforms digital information when it comes to comprehension.

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# The Genesis of microSEARCH™

## A Small Solution with Big Wins and How it Can Help You

By Mike Wesner  
Founder + Chief Imagination Officer, enrollmentFUEL

In 2009, I met with Christoph Guttentag of Duke University. Our conversation covered many topics, including technology. I showed him something that I was working on at the time. It was a card that tied into an early-day version of augmented reality. If a student scanned the card with a downloadable app, they would open the door to new information. What was even better was that the enrollment director would get an alert telling them that the card had been scanned.

The card triggered an idea for Christoph. As he thought about how to use it, he told me that he felt students interested in engineering would be more inclined to download the new app and apply it.

That prompted a shift in the conversation, and we ended up partnering to create a mini-campaign aimed at a smaller group of student recruits, exclusively for Duke’s Pratt School of Engineering.

This single campaign created a breakthrough in my thinking. I realized every school has a BIG IDEA they want to try, academic programs that need more seats filled, and new markets they want to test. This was my *aha moment* where I realized a mini test campaign would be helpful because:

- Leaders do not have the luxury of being able to wait for results from a yearlong A/B test
- It is too expensive to test a hunch on the yearlong campaign
- There is great interest in continually developing new markets. A mini-test campaign lets you find the right path in a cost-effective manner

The breakthrough energized me because I could see exciting possibilities for every school I support. I also realized that to be effective in this area required a new mindset along with new techniques, tools, and tactics.

Over the next five years, my team and I honed our expertise in this area. We are now microSEARCH™ pioneers and evangelists.

Our clients are finding success. Last year, enrollmentFUEL helped Drury University increase enrollment in a new market with a microSEARCH™ campaign. The micro campaign had all the features of a larger campaign, but was smaller and less costly, which made it a safe platform for testing a new idea.

Drury’s micro campaign ran in tandem with their traditional search methods, and it featured:

- Geodemographic research
- IP pre-targeting display ads
- Direct mail
- Email
- clickCAPTURING™ and meritBADGING™, two of enrollmentFUEL’s proprietary solutions

The targeted campaign achieved success by opening a significant new market, increasing new student enrollment to an all time high, and remaining cost-effective.

As you plan, think about how you can use *microSEARCH™* to reach a particular goal. It could be increasing a specific group of applicants, expanding in a geographic market or testing a hypothesis. By scaling down, you can pioneer new ideas and achieve new success.



Mike Wesner is the founder of enrollmentFUEL and our Chief Imagination Officer. He’s hoping to lead the Student Search revolution one micro idea at a time. Contact Mike at Mike.Wesner@enrollmentFUEL.com.





# Streamlining Resource Decisions Using Data-Driven Behavioral Scoring

communication

statistical model

consumer behavior

machine learning

patterns

scoring

visualization

predictive behavior

decision making

Today's enrollment environment is tougher than ever. With state and federal budget cuts, reduced institutional aid, and less outside scholarship funding from donors, we are being squeezed from every angle. Resources are limited. Behavioral scoring helps enrollment professionals be more intentional when matching up resources with prospective students. When an enrollment leader is pressured to carry a high volume of leads or soft applications in the school's pipeline, scoring can help pinpoint where to direct attention.

Examples of behaviors that should score points include:

- Clicking an email link
- Re-visiting your website
- Requesting information
- Following a school on social media
- Visiting a college fair table
- Attending a PV information session
- Visiting the campus

Using behavioral scoring allows you to focus attention and resources on the inquiries most likely to yield results. Scoring, coupled with geodemographic research, permits you to buy fewer names at the start of Student Search campaigning.

Not all inquiries are created equal. Combined with modeling, scoring helps you to decide which prospects are the most valuable in achieving the institutional profile that you seek. It also helps to focus recruitment energies and invest more resources in the students who are truly excited about your institution.

Scoring strategies in enrollment are most effectively mapped out in a team meeting where many factors are weighed. Simply opening an email may earn 5 points, but if done by a legacy student, this may warrant even more points; and, if is in the primary geographical drawing area, even more. Scoring systems don't have to be complex. In fact, keeping them simple has advantages. One example of a simple strategy is based on hot-warm-cold categories.

- **Hot** – already shown to be receptive, ready to invite to campus
- **Warm** – definite interest shown, needs more relationship building
- **Cold** – not interested at this time, add to next retargeting campaign

Another issue to consider when valuing leads is the concept of **endogeneity**. Researchers

Thompkins and Malthouse from Old Dominion University and Northwestern, respectively, addressed this issue in their joint paper titled, *A Primer on Using Behavior for Testing Theories in Advertising Research*.<sup>1</sup>

They point out that watching a TV commercial does not always equate to buying a product. Single interactions do not provide a complete picture. To effectively use behavioral scoring, enrollment departments must have a plan that looks at the entire journey taken by a student as they select a school, and how multiple actions add up. Formulas and marketing automation cannot close the loop on your process. At some point, it's still about people and the fact that, in this business, *people recruit people*. A scoring report can simply show you which students to call first, so you are putting your most valued energy in your most probable return on investment.

By measuring behavioral interactions over time, and using multiple behavioral events, you can identify who is advancing in the funnel, focus your resources on them and sleep better at night knowing you are targeting candidates with a real interest in attending your school.

*By measuring behavioral interactions over time, and using multiple behavioral events, you can identify who is advancing in the funnel, focus your resources on them and sleep better at night knowing you are targeting candidates with a real interest in attending your school.*

1. Liu-Thompkins, Y. & Malthouse, E.C. (2017). A primer on using behavioral data for testing theories in advertising research. *Journal of Advertising*, 1-13



...in the social media world, look at current students and successful alumni as **powerful influencers.**

# Is it Time for a Social Media Strategy Shift?

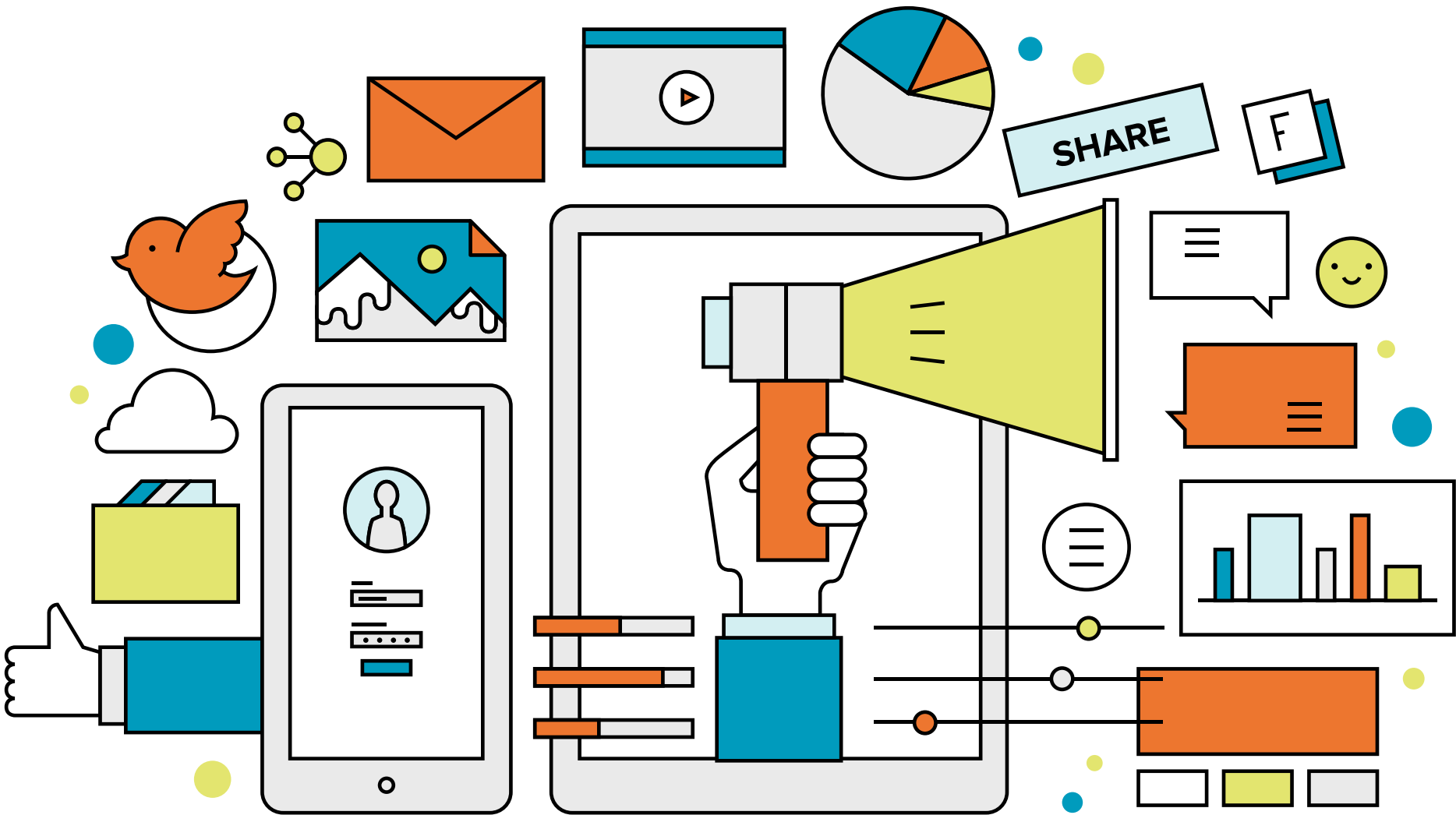
Although social media is now a normal part of every school's recruiting strategy, many schools are still discovering the best ways to use these tools effectively. One institution with an excellent social media outreach program is MIT. Their admissions website (<http://mitadmissions.org>) uses multiple social channels to promote the MIT brand and to connect prospective students with the school. Their blog (written by MIT staff, students and alumni) provides entertainment value and offers prospective students a personalized view of the school.<sup>1</sup>

Social media is dynamic and constantly evolving. It is worthwhile to periodically take a fresh look at the fundamentals and find ways to improve by asking:

- Who is our intended audience?
- What action do we want them to take?
- What social media sites are best for impacting actions deeper in the funnel?
- Who are the influencers that our prospective students follow?
- How do they want to receive content—videos, tweets, pins, posts or blog commentary?
- How can I integrate social media better with the rest of our enrollment marketing platform?

It's also good to put shares and likes in perspective. According to Longmire and Company, social media is better for building community by impacting yield and preventing melt. It's not the most effective top-of-funnel tool. The most used social medium continues to be Facebook, and it seems to be where "mom" gets much of her information.<sup>2</sup>

One last tip...in the social media world, look at current students and successful alumni as powerful influencers. Their participation on your social platforms stimulates conversations, and it pays to include them in your social media marketing program—especially when you're looking to move into new markets with your recruitment strategies.



1. Fusch, D. (2017) Social media and student recruitment. *Academic Impressions*. Retrieved from <http://www.academicimpressions.com/news/social-media-and-student-recruitment>

2. Longmire and Company. (2011) Study of parents: How they evaluate colleges and influence enrollment. Retrieved from [https://www.longmire-co.com/documents/studies/Parent\\_Study\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://www.longmire-co.com/documents/studies/Parent_Study_Final_Report.pdf)





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For more information contact

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