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REMARKABLE TOPICS

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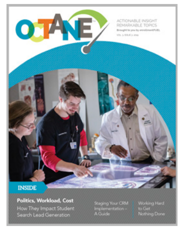
INSIDE

Letter from the President

Summer is a time when we shift from purposeful action to thoughtful complementation.



enrollmentFUEL would like to extend our gratitude to Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, NC for allowing this photo to be featured on the cover of our magazine.

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

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

Dear Octane Booster:

Summer is here. It's the time when we catch our breath before the next cycle begins, reflecting on what we did well and where we want to improve. We shift from purposeful action to thoughtful contemplation.

Before the new recruiting cycle begins, there is much to do. New counselors must be hired. Data must be analyzed, and communication flows assessed. We truly appreciate it when people share topics for future issues, so please let me know if there is anything you would like us to cover. Earlier in the year, we had a request for information about recruiting best practices at two-year colleges. In this issue, you will find one enrollment professional's recommendations in an article titled, "Tips and Tricks for Recruiting at a Two-Year College," with insight that can be applied to any institution.

In my article, "Politics, Workload, Cost — How They Impact Student Search Lead Generation," I offer thoughts on dealing with hard and soft leads – a topic that is often discussed among enrollment leaders during coffee breaks at conferences. Other topics include project management, marketing to Mom, institutional rankings and ratings, and a quick guide on staging your CRM implementation. As a new Slate Preferred Partner, we are excited to share CRM best practices.

We create this magazine to be a resource, supporting the important work you do. Have a wonderful summer, and thank you for being a part of the *Octane* community.

Yours in collaboration,

Jacquelyn D. Elliott, Ed.D.
President

inside OCTANE™

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Politics, Workload, Cost —

How They Impact Student Search Lead Generation

By Jacquelyn D. Elliott, Ed.D.

The landscape of Student Search has changed dramatically. Gone are the days of simply mailing a letter with a reply mechanism and yielding a high return. And, as much as we want to believe that technology has made things less expensive with a higher rate of return—that simply isn't the case.

Over the past few years, we have been getting more and more questions about lead generation, what to call a lead, how to identify and code inquiries, and at what level each should be engaged.

As an enrollment professional who is expected to generate high volumes of leads from Student Search, what can you do? In the changing landscape, how do you code and recruit your leads in an ethical way? In this article, I share some general best practices and suggestions for the current landscape, and three areas to consider: (a) politics, (b) workload, and (c) cost.

Politics

To answer the first question of what can you do, you must work with your Student Search provider to identify the parameters of what you want to call an inquiry. We have seen this range from students who simply engage with emails to students who land on a landing page. Very strict parameters would only count students who engage in some action on the landing page once they get there.

Remember when I said politics comes into play? For many enrollment leaders, there is strong pressure to produce (or show in weekly reports) large numbers at the top of the funnel, because conventional wisdom says the more at the top, the more at the bottom. While Dukesmith's[1] sales model has worked for generations, it isn't always the right solution for certain schools.

Using geodemographic research can, in fact, help you buy *fewer* names—but the *right* names—and yield a larger class. This is scary for many people because it seems instinctively backward. For leaders who work for presidents and boards who measure early success based on the number of inquiries you have, a lower number at the top of the funnel raises red flags, which can stress you and your team for an entire cycle. In scenarios like this, I

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suggest you stick with your traditional volume, but code inquiries differently as they come into your system. Divide solid and soft inquiries into categories, and treat them differently in your communications flow. For soft inquiries, perhaps you only mail invitations for campus visits and include these inquiries in application pushes. Or, you could adopt a separate communications flow (described on the next page) to help move their interest and gain mindshare.

Work Load

The more students in the funnel, the heavier the workload. There is a bit of a twisted irony here because schools who perceive they need a lot of volume at the top, to get volume at the bottom, often experience intense pressure to hit the annual recruitment goal, despite limited staff.

Small private colleges have smaller budgets for the hiring of the counseling staff, so there isn't a huge cadre of employees managing the funnel. Still, most schools have four or five admissions counselors in the small private liberal arts sector. An admissions counselor could be managing anywhere from 2,500 to 5,000 students (or more) in their territory—often without the resources to manage their caseload effectively. *How do we build relationships with this volume of students?* You can't. It simply is not possible.

However, there is one trick that helps manage case overload. Many schools are having success "baking cookies" or placing tracking pixels on websites to capture student behavior. This tracking allows the behavior to be monitored and scored over a period of time providing an assessment of engagement. This makes it easier for counselors to then invest in the *right* students because they have better insight regarding *true* interest.

The *white noise* of volume gets in the way of knowing where to focus and which students are most likely to attend. If we are using predictive models to help identify students deeper in the funnel who are the hottest leads, then why didn't we do that at the top of the funnel before the name buy in the first place?

The more students there are in each territory, the more fatigued the staff members become working the potential wrong students. That's the bottom line. At the end of the day, as leaders, our goal is to fill the funnel with the right students, and then identify the hot and soft leads, so the staff knows where to focus their energy. This is the responsibility of leadership, not the territory manager.

Cost

For many of you, overall budgets are shrinking, or budget categories are being eliminated. Yet, you are expected to bring in more students with better academic profiles and lower discount rates. The rubber band only stretches so far before snapping. In my opinion, using a geodemographic overlay is a really smart use of money, since it helps shape a name buy. We buy in nine-digit zip code ranges from vendors, and certain territories never yield. Why are we searching those students? Because we lack data to determine an appropriate suppression list.

With a suppression list, schools looking to stretch budgets can remove names they have bought to save valuable postage money, and do more with the students who are most likely to enroll.

Of course, many schools have the budgets to just march on as usual. In these cases, you still want to look at how you allocate your Student Search budget to ensure you create a 360-degree communication plan that includes IP targeting, social media, email, text messaging, direct mail, and fulfillment as part of your Student Search.

Direct mail, you say? Absolutely. Direct mail is rebounding, and in fact, it is 28 times more likely to be opened than email. Once it is opened, 75% of people are more likely to read direct mail, compared to 68% reading email once opened.[2] Furthermore, according to the Direct Marketing Association, direct mail sent to homes had a 5.1% response rate vs. email's 0.6% response rate, while direct mail sent to prospects had a 2.9% response rate vs. email's 0.2%.[3] We clearly cannot sell short the value of direct mail.

How to code hand-raisers in your CRM remains a critical part of your strategy for managing your overall budget. Which students are the hottest leads? Do you include soft leads—those who only open email and don't take any other action, and if so, what do they get in your communication flow? Parsing out your various types of inquiries is the first part of the solution, followed by creating a segmented flow.

As I conclude, the last point I will focus on is how to handle soft leads and how to communicate with them. If we have tagged them as soft because they didn't engage with the campaign in the way we had operationally defined, we still need to market to them because they might generate the last ten deposits to help us reach our goal. Our communication needs to be distinct to move the student and generate action.

One of the best strategies I have ever used for soft inquiries was to *not* sell them on my school. Yep—you read that correctly. Rather, I designed a series of mailings "sponsored" by my institution with only a logo, and instead, focused on information that was helpful to the student in preparing for the transition to college. I didn't sell my academic programs, majors, or tout rankings. Instead, I focused on where the student and family were in their psychological journey, and helped them by serving as a surrogate guidance counselor through the communication flow. In many circles, this is called psychological needs fulfillment.[4]

How do I know this worked? Two reasons. First, we did not change any other parameters in our recruitment cycle that year, and our numbers increased by about 20 new students. (For you big state guys, that isn't much. But, for small private schools, that was a win!) Second, when we did student focus groups of matriculated students, the students validated that they felt as if the school cared about them and was invested in their success. They said they felt like it wasn't all about the school, but truly about what mattered to them.

In summary, as you move into your next Student Search cycle, be prepared to define what solid and soft leads are (and if you even want soft leads). Determine how to code leads. Segment mail and determine what message you want to send to each group once they are introduced to your communications flow.

Politics, workload, and budget—they all play a major role in the final strategy you implement, so consider how they affect you and pay close attention to the nuances of each factor.

Dr. Jacquelyn D. Elliott is President of enrollmentFUEL. Her admissions, retention, and financial aid strategies have led multiple institutions to reach record enrollments. She can be reached at jacqui.elliott@enrollmentfuel.com.

1 Dukesmith. (1906). Salesmanship Magazine.
2 ANA/DMA Response Rate Report 2018
3 https://www.marketingcharts.com/digital-78422
4 Rayburn, Anderson, & Smith. (2018).Designing marketing courses based on self-determination theory: Promoting psychological needs fulfillment and improving student learning outcomes. Journal for the Advancement of Marketing Education (26). 22-32.

Staging Your CRM Implementation—*A Guide*

By Jay T. Fedje

When you've been given the institutional mandate to increase enrollment, you need the right tools. A CRM solution is one of the biggest investments you make, and an essential tool for today's enrollment management professional.

There are many options from which to choose. Price tags, functions, and features vary widely. Some could work better than others with your Student Information System (SIS).

Each CRM comes with its own implementation plan. Some require high levels of engagement from the software providers, while others are do-it-yourself solutions where you act as the primary developer of your own unique system.

If you have not yet invested in a CRM, or are thinking about upgrading to a new solution, I have offered thoughts on the many factors to consider so you are prepared, staffed, and educated for this major institutional software implementation.

Hard Truths

CRMs are never a one-and-done budget item. You are likely to incur additional costs if you need non-standard or extra features. Many, but not all, have limits to customization.

Other costs to consider include hiring ongoing developers with specific certifications, a full-time staff member to manage the new tech, training for the team, and attractive add-on and upsell features.

Working with four different CRM systems over the course of my career taught me to expect ongoing connection challenges when it comes to keeping the SIS and CRM working in harmony – particularly when there is a software patch, or you add new functionality. I also learned the hard way that, no matter what anyone thinks prior to an implementation, there may be major limitations when trying to connect with legacy software used for an institution's fund raising, student affairs, alumni relations, academic affairs, retention, athletics, and financial aid.

While there are hardships, there are also big payoffs. To get away from an implementation that feels like you are "changing tires while driving the car," I recommend planning for three phases to develop your CRM solution:

- Prepare the solid foundation for success
- Marketing and data reporting
- Pioneer new frontiers

PHASE 1:
Prepare the Solid Foundation for Success

One of the first decisions you must make is whether you will group all enrollment activities together, or separate out graduate, adult, and traditional recruitment systems. In other words, how many factors are you wanting and willing to manage? There are pros and cons to both directions. Keeping all your enrollment programs together can save some money while creating an economy of scale. However, you'll have more difficulty developing a system identity (communication flow, automation, counselor identifiers, etc.) for each program. Separating your enrollment programs into unique systems (instances) allows for higher levels of customization, but also requires a higher level of system management and oversight for each instance.

Are you considering a cloud-based system? Or, are you installing a CRM that resides on institutional servers? If the CRM resides on your school's servers, you will require a significantly higher

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degree of IT commitment from your school than when storage is outsourced.

Put together a plan for data migration. Know how you will build an effective data bridge from your existing CRM (or system of record, which can be the SIS) to and from your new CRM. You should also decide ***when*** in the prospect lifecycle to migrate data from your CRM to your SIS. An early transfer of student data (inquiry level or before) will require expandable storage space. Migrating data at the application stage, or later, will require less storage space. However, you will need a harmonized approach when you transfer important admissions data between the two data systems.

Build your unique student records and rules. Many CRMs have basic templates for student records that you'll need to learn and adapt to, while others offer a more customizable approach that fits your needs.

What is the plan for admissions staff training? And retraining, and retraining?

Map out your process for event management, including scheduling and surveying prospective students. Build enrollment funnel reporting.

Think about your Request for Information (RFI) form and your admissions application. You can build and maintain a password protected institutional admissions application or outsource your application and build a data delivery process. No matter what you choose, recognize that the application is critical. **A clunky form can negatively impact enrollment.**

Last of all, plan and execute data loads and transfer processes from RFI forms, data sets, and applications into your CRM.

PHASE 2:
Marketing and Data Reporting

Map out your communication plan, including emails, SMS text messaging, letters and collateral. Assess your capacity to add personalization to your communication plan. This is an area where it pays to take a crawl-walk-run approach, since personalization errors are a cause of great distress.

Decide how you will automate various communication channels and determine triggers.

Think through your report requirements and data analytics. Create a dashboard that provides regular, scheduled, quick and easy-to-understand reports for campus leaders.

Decide who within the university will have access to the CRM data. You have faculty, coaches and staff who will help recruit students. Training them to use the CRM communication tools can be a great asset for the university.

Connect to financial aid (PowerFAIDS) software, athletic recruiting software and other systems, in a methodical organized manner.

PHASE 3:
Pioneer New Frontiers

When you're ready, venture into new territory and take over elements of your Student Search. Integrate with your website and social media to capture analytics.

Capture data and analytics to build predictive modeling and financial aid leveraging models for recruiting.

Other Factors to Consider

One pitfall I have seen (and experienced) is placing the sole responsibility of the new CRM on the shoulders of your IT department. IT departments have other important things to do, like keeping the servers working, managing common software applications like email, maintaining your Student Information System, and ensuring institutional security to keep threats at bay.

If you must stand in line with other institutional priorities when your CRM is implemented and developed, you'll probably find yourself somewhere down a list waiting for things to "loosen up," and that never happens.

To ensure your enrollment priorities are treated like real priorities, have a two-fold plan when you make the pitch to invest in your new CRM solution. Your first priority is to find the right CRM for your school. The second priority is to make sure you have sufficient staffing to implement, operationalize and support the CRM into the future. That cannot be done by placing the responsibility for the implementation on the shoulders of people who are already working sixty-hour weeks.

Bill Gates said, "The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient

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operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency."[1]

The right CRM system gives you tremendous power to automate repetitive administrative tasks and increase efficiency in your shop. Without a good plan, your implementation will create unnecessary work and anxiety, and make your team less efficient – not more. Ultimately, the very tool you expected to help you increase enrollment can have the opposite impact, as your team is focused on the system implementation, not recruitment.

Be educated, prepared, and staffed. And, be prepared to be flexible. You can't anticipate everything, but with the right attitude, you can overcome anything.

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1. Retrieved from https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/bill_gates_104353

Working Hard to Get Nothing Done:
A Lesson in Project Management

By Cié Gee, Ed.D.

How many times have we, as higher education professionals, found ourselves knee-deep in projects, strategic planning, or brilliant new Presidential initiatives, plus all the responsibilities that come with our daily job duties? How many times have you seen a year pass without completing goals, either because they were shelved when new and shiny objectives replaced them, or fell victim to chaotic emergencies? If you are looking for ideas to stay on track with goals and projects, keep reading to discover the one approach that works well for everything, from individual office projects to large cross-campus initiatives.

I have over twelve years of experience in enrollment management. My current role is in strategic planning and assessment for enrollment at a large public institution. One day, in our enrollment management leadership staff meeting, we were working on our newly implemented, extremely aggressive, strategic enrollment management plan.

It consisted of seven HUGE initiatives, with dozens of smaller projects. As we were going around the room updating each other on the progress, the consensus was, "It's going well. We are moving along, and working hard, although we are very busy."

The voice of internal assessment inside my head kept asking, "What is going well? How is it moving along? What stage are you in?"

Of course, everyone was working very hard and, yes, we were all busy. However, with so many overlapping projects, some initiatives were going to get lost unless we had a stringent project management plan.

My concerns led me to research. Since I knew that software developers used project management tools, I started there and investigated SCRUM methodology, which originated from the disciplines of engineering, math, and computer science. As I researched, a light bulb went off in my head. I saw how this project management tool could be adapted to work for enrollment management projects.

In short, SCRUM allows teams to manage projects more effectively, by ensuring real-time process review and adaptive decisions, if needed. It allows for flexibility in changing environments, while proposing an interactive, team-based approach.

Project Management in the "Weeds"

Allow me to take project management out of higher education for this analogy's sake. Pretend that you have a spring project and want to tidy up the yard after a winter of neglect. You and your family meet and identify tasks. You need to mow the lawn, weed the flower bed, pick up fallen branches, bag up the leaves, take down an old above-ground pool and repair the fence. Some tasks are smaller, like mowing the lawn. Others require more time, such as deconstructing the pool and repairing the fence.

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SCRUM

SCRUM is a project management methodology. A SCRUM Master leads a small team, identifying obstacles and clearing them, so the team can stay focused on completing work. Work is done in sprints, which are short cycles focused on completing specific tasks.

For more information about SCRUM, visit *scrummethodology.com*

Saturday arrives. Everyone shows up to pitch in and achieve the goal of tidying up. As you mow the lawn, your brother begins taking down the pool. Water floods the lawn, which makes it impossible to mow. While your dad weeds the flower bed, he notices a broken bird feeder, and he stops weeding to fix it. Since you cannot mow the wet grass, you decide to repair the fence. Since you didn't tell anyone your plan, the family dog gets out and escapes through the hole in the fence. Everyone stops what they are doing to look for the dog, and work is derailed for several hours.

Everyone is working very hard, but very little is getting done – similar to what happens with many enrollment projects and initiatives. Everyone is busy, but you aren't seeing much forward progress. The following lays out steps to improve project management in your office and put progress on the fast track.

STEP 1:
Write Goals and Action Steps

Sometimes, the selection of goals and initiatives is up to individual departments. Other times, initiatives are handed down from higher up. Whatever the case, everyone should know about the goals and initiatives, and they include the following characteristics:

- Appropriate for your department, and be a match for your mission and vision
- Can be broken into actionable steps (tasks needed) that are concrete, measurable, transparent, and attainable
- Include the identification of necessary support and resources
- Include a timeline
- Be written so clearly that someone from the outside can understand the goal

STEP 2:
Are We Done Yet?

Beginning with the end in mind is a well-known mantra. However, it is overlooked quite often in planning. After determining your goals and/or initiatives, you must develop pass/fail criteria. All initiatives must have a clearly stated definition of "done." Definitions are important, since perceptions of "done" can vary from person to person. In our yard clean-up example, the weeding of the flower bed appeared to be interrupted by an impromptu birdhouse repair. If Dad thought he had done an adequate job of weeding, then it was logical to him to move to another project.

Defining acceptance criteria creates focus, so work can be more targeted and efficient. It also keeps everyone involved in a project on the same page. Along with goals and initiatives, your acceptance criteria should be clearly written, keeping the team laser-focused on intermediate and final goals.

STEP 3:
That's Not My Job

Determine who owns the initiative and who owns individual tasks. This solves two problems. First, when changes are needed, or decisions must be made, progress can reach a stalemate if there is confusion about ownership. With confusion, you run the risk of everyone assuming someone else is taking care of it or saying, "It's not my job," or "I can't make that decision," and nothing gets accomplished.

The second need for a declaration of ownership comes from the process of reviewing the project while it is in progress and evaluation of acceptance criteria when it is complete. The owner should have the capability to make changes and adjustments throughout the process and determine if the pass/fail criteria has been met. The owner is not only responsible for execution, but also for the sustainability of the outcome after the project has been completed.

STEP 4:
Plan Out the Plan

If our imaginary yard clean-up process had been mapped out with a timeline, we might have avoided the loss of time and resources – and the dog! Projects, goals, and initiatives are often very large and complex. In this step, write down every task that is needed to move the project to completion. Get as granular as needed, depending on the team and the project. Pass/fail criteria should be written for the large initiative, and also for each task along the way.

STEP 5:
Visualization

Your project management plan is worthless unless it is visible to the team. There are many project management tools (Basecamp, Trello, Microsoft Project, Smartsheet). If you don't want to learn a new tool, one basic, yet extremely effective way to visualize, is to create a simple sticky note board located in a prominent place in the office where it is visible to the team. With three columns labeled, *"Do," "Doing,"* and *"Done,"* you can create a living process through which all can interact and see progress.

DO	DOING	DONE
The "Do" column lists all the tasks that have not been started. In the beginning, all the tasks related to this project will appear here on sticky notes.	***The "Doing" column holds all tasks that are currently (and actively) being worked on.***	***The "Done" column contains all the completed tasks.***

Remember, all tasks need their own set of pass/fail criteria. Once all the sticky notes are in the Done column, the project is complete. All tasks should include timeline information, noting when they will begin, and when they should be complete.

Review the visual on a schedule with the team. This could be a quick 15 minutes each morning, or once a week for big projects with a longer timeline.

Team meetings are not meant to discuss the entire project at length, but are held to answer three questions quickly:

1. What has happened since our last meeting?
2. What are individual team members working on right now?
3. What issues are stopping people from moving forward?

This meeting time is sacred and only used for review of the sticky board. No other topics should derail this valuable time. This visualization creates:

Accountability. Everyone sees progress, including their own. If you're spending a lot of time working on a task that isn't on the board, you can decide if it should be added, parked and addressed later. Maybe it should even be assigned to another staff member. The act of simply moving sticky notes across the board also produces satisfaction by allowing you to see progress.

Problem-solving. By having everyone on the team viewing and meeting regularly to discuss progress briefly, it is easy to identify issues and solve problems.

Identify barriers. If a task is not moving, this serves as a red flag to investigate.

Adaptability. Tasks can be changed, and new tasks can be added as the project moves forward. Factors like funding, resources, and staff changes can impact a project and require agile responses. With a repeated review of where you are in the process, changes can be more easily made to keep the project on track.

STEP 6:
Getting Everyone on Board

How do you ***manage*** your project management tool? Everyone on the team must ***be involved and stay involved,*** to make this work**.** That is why you need a strict schedule for 15-minute meetings.

There should also be one person assigned as the project manager. This individual is responsible for monitoring the board and communicating with individuals about their progress and barriers. In other words, as stated in step number three, someone has to own the tool.

We all do incredible work at our institutions. As higher education keeps changing, demanding that we do more with less, effective project management will become even more critical. This framework is one I have found to be effective for keeping both large and small projects, goals, and initiatives on track.

Ginnifer Cié Gee, Ed.D. is the Director of Strategic Planning and Assessment for Enrollment at the University of Texas San Antonio, and an expert in professional workplace dynamics and communication, including nonverbal, perceptions, leadership, etiquette, and conflict. She has over twelve years of experience in enrollment management, and has presented over 50 sessions on a wide range of topics at state, regional, and national levels, receiving many awards for her presentation skills. Contact Cié at Ginnifer.Gee@utsa.edu.

Winning Mom's Heart:

The Key to Enrollment Marketing Success

By Mike Wesner

MOM IS A GATEKEEPER, A CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST, A FINANCIAL ADVISOR, AND A PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST. SHE READS EVERYTHING THAT YOU MAIL. SHE LOOKS AT YOUR WEBSITE, TALKS TO COUNSELORS AND OTHER PARENTS, AND CHECKS OUT YOUR SCHOOL'S SOCIAL POSTS ON FACEBOOK.

Mom often decides where her student will go to college. The thought first hit me during a conversation with a prospective client more than a decade ago. I was asked about developing a "Mom" communication piece. Without consciously analyzing my position, I answered, "All pieces are Mom communications." By then, I was starting to know that we had to assume this because she's a gatekeeper, influencer, mathematician, statistician, etc. She's everything and is so important to the enrollment process, yet I think we don't want to accept it.

Several years later, I was at a conference, where I heard a joint presentation about "myth-busting" by two distinguished marketers. The pair at the podium spent an hour knocking traditional marketing channels, and telling a room packed with seasoned enrollment professionals that they were doing it all wrong and needed to make major changes if they wanted to be relevant to teenagers.

"Mail is dead," they said, "and kids don't look at email." They made it sound like you could Instagram or Snapchat your way to increased enrollment, and quoted plenty of statistics to support their theory.

I left unconvinced because by then, I had talked to enough parents, enrollment professionals and marketers to believe that in most cases, Mom heavily influences the process and the choice — or even casts the deciding vote when the moment of decision arrives.

This has played out in my own life. Two of my sons are now college graduates. In both cases, my wife of 31 years was instrumental in guiding our personal Student Search activities.

Mom is a gatekeeper, a child psychologist, a financial advisor, and a procurement specialist. She reads everything you mail. She looks at your website, talks to counselors and other parents, and checks out your school's social posts on Facebook.

Dr. Althea Riddick is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management/ Registrar at Elizabeth State University. Her school, located in rural eastern North Carolina, is heavily influenced by the traditions of Northeastern North Carolina and also affordably attractive to those in the Virginia Tidewater region.

She and I recently talked about best practices in enrollment, and during that discussion, I thought she said, "DAD IS THE DRIVER." I leaned in, repeated what she said, and asked if I had understood.

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She answered with a laugh, and said, "Dad is the driver, only because he drives Mom and the student to the school. We then see him fade to the back of the room. Dad drives the car, but Mom drives the enrollment process."

Mom is critical to the enrollment process, yet many people don't seem to want to believe or accept it. She is the DRIVER. The leader. She is the drum major who sets the pace for the family band. She is why direct mail is important today.

In some homes, Mom is the one who gets the mail. In others, she looks at it once another family member places it on the kitchen counter. If it has to do with her VIC (Very Important Child), then you can be assured she will pick it up, study the pictures, read the copy, and pay more attention to the ads that show up on her tablet while she is researching the best vitamins for her VIC to take.

Mom also cares about campus safety, food quality, and academic support. She wants to know her child will be able to get a job after they get a degree. Since Mom is an experienced "buyer," she will expect you to prove any and all claims, so be prepared. To stay on Mom's good side, and have a readily available arsenal, here are five ideas to connect with Mom.

ONE:

Understand that *every communication* is a Mom communication.

Every email, every banner ad, every mailing. Consider how your message and design will strike Mom, as well as your potential student. Find ways to create communications that resonate with both of them.

TWO:

Mom is the check-writer.

According to a 2018 national study by Sallie Mae™, the publicly traded company financing many student loans, parents cover 34% of the costs of college. More than half of families borrow for college, and in one in three of the families, the parents share responsibility for student loan payments.[1] This means Mom has a lot to say about what schools are affordable and considered, and ultimately, where her child will go.

THREE:

Mom needs to know about outcomes.

Many Gen X moms work outside the home, and were personally touched by the 2007 recession. She needs to know her child is well-prepared for survival in the work-world and can get a decent job after graduation.

FOUR:

Mom is on Facebook.

A *New York Times* article reported that Gen Z adults aged 35 to 49 spent an average of 6 hours and 58 minutes per day on social media networks, with Facebook dominating on mobile.[2] Do you have a strategy to reach Mom through this channel?

FIVE:

Mom is likely to read a letter or read the copy on a postcard.

Use mail to build a relationship. Find ways to connect offline communications with online information, since a Gen X mom is tech savvy and never far from her smart phone.

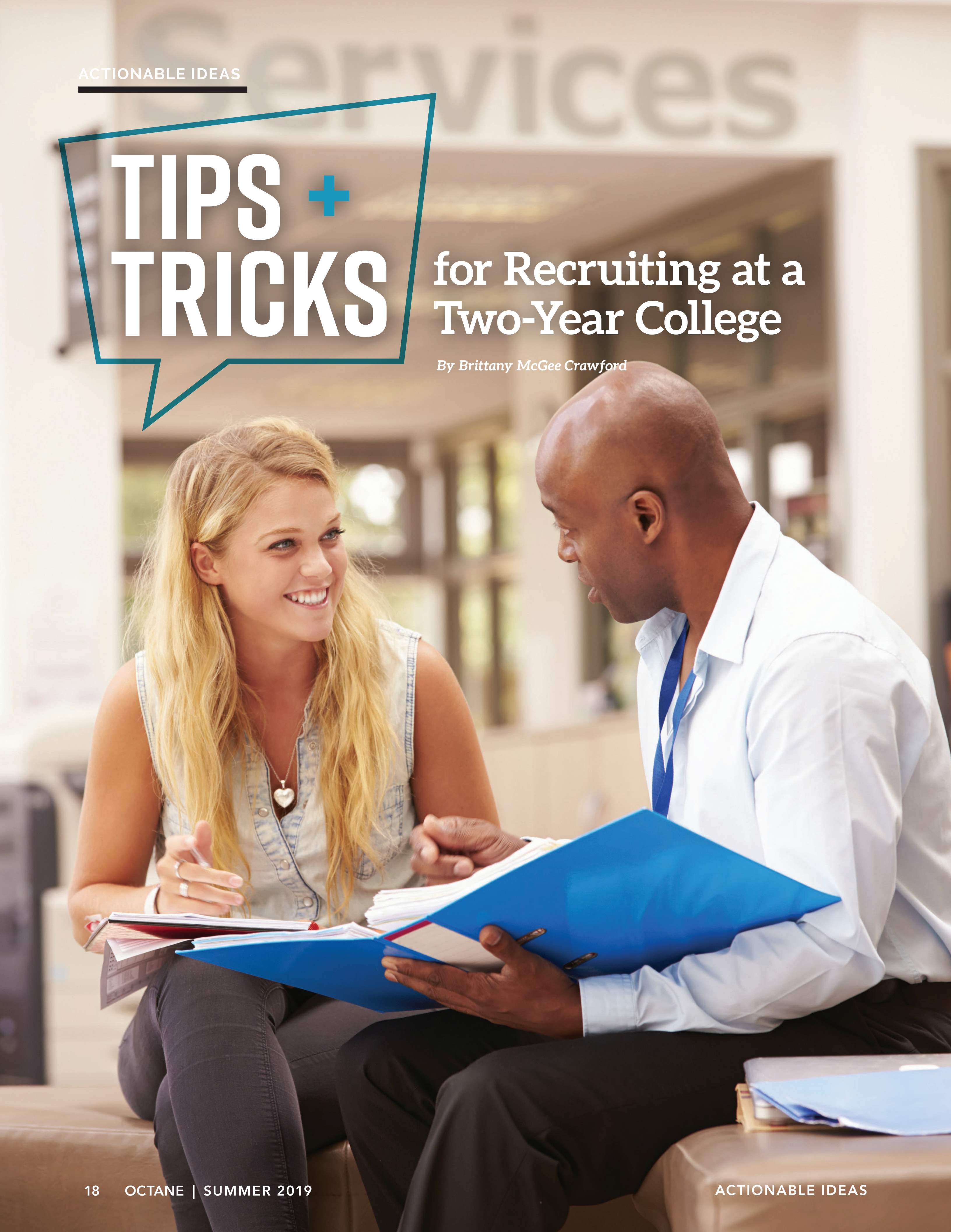
At enrollmentFUEL, we spend a lot of time thinking about emerging technologies and the next cool thing. It is our job to know and understand how new channels and tactics can help our clients. However, we also believe that people recruit people, and that Mom is an important person to have on your side. Don't ignore her. Remember, her VIC is soon going to be your responsibility!

MOM IS CRITICAL TO THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS, YET MANY PEOPLE DON'T SEEM TO WANT TO BELIEVE OR ACCEPT IT. SHE IS THE **DRIVER**. THE LEADER. SHE IS THE DRUM MAJOR WHO SETS THE PACE FOR THE FAMILY BAND. SHE IS WHY DIRECT MAIL IS IMPORTANT TODAY.

Mike Wesner is the founder and Chief Imagination Officer at enrollmentFUEL. While every family is unique, Mike believes that most mothers have the power to sway the college decision process. Two of his three sons are now college graduates. Mike's wife, Sharon, is a healthcare administration professional, and she has been the guiding force in their family during the college selection process. Do you agree or disagree? Mike is eager to get your vote, so contact him at mike.wesner@enrollmentfuel.com.

1 Retrieved from https://www.salliemae.com/about/leading-research/how-america-pays-for-college/

2 Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/technology/millennial-social-media-usage.html



TIPS + TRICKS for Recruiting at a Two-Year College

By Brittany McGee Crawford

Enrollment at a two-year college is similar to a revolving door. Round and round it goes. Unlike four-year institutions, we don't have the luxury of developing relationships over several years. Every year at the start of the cycle, the countdown starts. To make sure we hit our goal, we rely on time-tested tips, tricks, and best practices.

Know Who You Are

This is one of the fundamental principles of enrollment marketing, and is critical for any two-year or four-year school. Be sure your staff can *consistently* state who you are, the value of a degree, and the opportunities your college offers. The staff must also be knowledgeable about programs, majors, and the overall benefits of getting an associate degree or technical certification.

To be prepared to explain the value, think about what potential students and their families want to know. Document graduation rates, provide information about transfer scholarships, and outcomes, and collect success stories from graduates. For example, the lifetime earnings of a student with an associate degree have proven to be $250,000 higher than a student with just a high school diploma.[1]

What makes you stand out from other schools? What appeals to students? What appeals to parents? Take time to think about this and identify your key marketing points. Involve all departments on campus in this process, and use the information to customize your marketing to your specific students.

Once You Have Your Message, Put It To Use!

After crafting your message, now you have to put it to use! Sell your school through phone calls, emails, direct mail, and social media. The most important piece of this is developing a communication plan. Often, that is easier said than done.

How are you going to deliver your key marketing points? When and to whom?

By collaborating with the entire enrollment team, your plan will be stronger – which is important, since the communication plan is your lifeline to enrollment success.

Before the next recruiting cycle, gather everyone in the office together. Evaluate every piece of communication that prospective students receive. This includes each piece of mail, email templates, phone scripts, and even photographs used on the website.

Start by thinking through the initial contact with the prospective student, whether that is buying their name through Student Search efforts or meeting them at a college fair. From that point, explore all the communications that potential students receive, until they arrive on campus to take classes.

Consider every step and overlook nothing! For example, if a student receives a mailing telling them that your college awarded over two million dollars in scholarships, do they get a follow-up phone call (which helps you develop a meaningful relationship) to discuss scholarship options? Put yourself in the student's shoes during the review process. Be sure each piece of the plan makes sense and appeals to them. If it doesn't, revise it or replace it.

Once the plan is in place, make a master calendar. It will be your best friend and your worst enemy, since it holds you accountable for what happens during the coming year and helps you keep your communication flow on track. Include key information, like open house dates, registration days, and important deadlines for scholarships, and deposits.

Include deadlines for other important tasks, like printing a piece of mail or having an email template ready for review. Everyone in the office should have

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access to the master calendar and be aware of upcoming deadlines and action items. Recruiting a class is a big undertaking with lots of moving parts, and it can be daunting. A master calendar is worth the struggle because it reassures you that you are staying on-task for the end goal.

Time to Train

After developing the plan and calendar, it's time to train your enrollment team. Have an off-site meeting or retreat with a "refresher" course of talking points, important information, and selling skills. Review and establish staff expectations, along with policies and procedures.

Even seasoned counselors benefit from training. It also pays to invest time sharing information with campus departments, such as athletics, academics, and new hires at your college. Recruiting and retention go beyond your department. It must be a vital campus-wide activity. By sharing information and providing training, others are more likely to buy into your recruiting efforts. If you want everyone to have the same goal in mind, investing the time to share a clear, concise message helps to get everyone in the boat rowing in the same direction.

Almost Ready to Start!

Communications are set, and the staff is informed. Now what? Review and set goals for the next year's recruiting cycle. Research enrollment trends. Study data collected at all stages of the funnel from any student expressing interest in your college. Review information to discover trends or comparisons that are helpful to your recruiting process.

Share the data and its implications with key staff members at your college. Develop a weekly report with enrollment data to present at executive staff meetings. Be realistic. Goals should be achievable with the right amount of blood, sweat, and tears contributed to the effort.

To Succeed, People Must Perform

Have weekly "enrollment expectations" meetings with each counselor. Use this time to discuss performance and expectations. Compare year-to-year data and

Recruiting is not easy. It can be tiring, thankless, and sometimes frustrating. This is especially true when recruiters see students flocking to the table of a well-known university, while your team is passing out popcorn while doing a handstand – and STILL, no one pays attention.

discuss action items. If a counselor needs to improve in an area, discuss that during this time. Provide feedback and suggestions about meeting expected goals, because lack of communication can affect the entire efforts of the office.

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To liven things up and keep recruiting interesting, offer competitions with incentives for counselors. Who can get the most applications over the next two weeks? The winner gets to leave at 3 o'clock on Friday. As the saying goes, you're only as strong as your weakest link. Don't let the staff become complacent. I've been there and done that. Trust me — you won't make your enrollment goal! Celebrate each success and make counselors feel appreciated. Push your staff to be better. Encourage them to step out of their comfort zone and grow.

And, you must also push yourself, because your staff will only be as good as their leader. Be passionate about what you do! Find professional development opportunities and seize them. Take every opportunity to learn more about your profession and enrollment trends, whether that is reading a book or attending a conference. You work in a demanding environment, and it's important to stay upbeat and motivated.

Don't Forget the "Why"

What enrollment professionals do is important. Why? Because you help a student choose their "life path" (though it may not always seem that way☺).

After two years at my college, students leave with an associate degree, and they are better prepared for life. That makes all the hours spent standing around at college fairs, making phone calls, and answering the same question posed in 100 emails worthwhile.

Brittany McGee Crawford is the Director of Enrollment Management for Marion Military Institute. She has an M.B.A. in Accounting and Finance from the Florida Institute of Technology. For the last decade of her career, she has worked at Marion Military Institute, located in Marion, Alabama. Email Brittany at bcrawford@marionmilitary.edu.

1 Retrieved from https://trends.collegeboard.org/education-pays/figures-tables/lifetime-earnings-education-level#Key%20Points

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About enrollmentFUEL

Reach your enrollment goals with **enrollmentFUEL**. We're on a mission to create a better Student Search experience—one that is more efficient and more effective. Using tools and creative thinking, we provide results and actionable insight to the **people who recruit people.**

enrollmentFUEL has extensive expertise in geodemographic research, predictive modeling and web analytics. We combine these techniques with creative design and messaging to tell your story to your target audience. Our approach amplifies your targeted message through intelligent integration of all communication channels, including email, direct mail, online advertising, IP targeting, retargeting, geotargeting, and social media advertising.

If you're looking for innovative thinking, and new options to achieve success, **enrollmentFUEL** can help.

microSEARCH™

A smaller, focused Student Search campaign that is created to test new ideas or attack a very limited challenge, such as promoting a new program or fixing a deficiency that the school may be experiencing.

clickCAPTURING™

Learn which inquiries consistently return to your website with clickCAPTURING™ technology. By leveraging behavioral data with triggered communications, we can motivate prospective students to take the next step.

bannerDIRECT™

Research shows banner ads directly reach suspects and prospects at the top of the funnel. We can help you use this "billboard" strategy to create interest at the top of your funnel before and after sending mail and email.

matchBACK™

Similar to our clickCAPTURING™ solution, this emerging technology represents a futuristic way of identifying additional hand-raisers in your Student Search program without the use of tracking cookies. Enrollment leaders are often unaware of these leads, and by capturing this stealth activity, you're developing an additional and continuous flow of more qualified leads each month.

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