Digital Marketing Must-Haves to Increase Student Enrollments NOW
Agenda

1. Level Agency Overview
2. The Education Landscape
3. Must Haves
   a. Landing page
   b. Paid Search
   c. Custom Audience Targeting
4. Growth Drivers
5. Takeaways
Your Presenters Today

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LEVEL AGENCY

We are experts in digital student generation.

We are a full-service agency custom-built for higher education partners. We invest in people, technology, partnerships, and strategies that deliver measurable ROI for our partners.

We plan and build vertically-integrated conversion funnels that reach, engage, activate, and nurture highly targeted prospective student audiences with messages that resonate.

75+ Employees
Pittsburgh, PA
Charleston, SC
Founded 2010
Student Generation is in our DNA
Institutions need to be digitally proactive in order to meet prospects where they are looking:

75% Share of total leads who indicate their preferred method for evaluating schools is digital
We will talk about these tactics today:

- Landing page
- Paid search
- Custom Audience Targeting
- Growth Drivers
Must-Have #1: Landing page
The most influential resource is the one you own

Your owned property is the number one source of influence for a student in their decision-making process.

- University website, social pages, videos, or virtual event/webinar: 20%
- Recommendation from family/friend/coworker: 16%
- I took classes at the school's physical campus before enrolling online: 10%
- Phone call with the school: 10%
- Affiliate/aggregator: 8%

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Google, September 2018, Survey n=1042, Note: Excludes online search
Invest in an informative website

59%
Lift in conversions

*Demo data only
For mobile, consider creating and using AMP versions of your landing pages for the fastest experience.

- Research shows conversions fall by 12% for every extra second a webpage takes to load.
- AMP pages load faster than all but the most highly optimized HTML pages.
- Faster load times reduce abandonment and bounce rates, which can increase conversions and improve your overall ad performance.

<1 second average load time  
10x less data Used compared to non-AMP page
Address them like the individuals they are

- Personalization is important
- Connect query intent + audience with personalized ads and landing page
- Utilize remarketing to address hand raisers
Must-Have #2: Paid Search
Prospects start their journey on search

Question: What was the first thing you did after you were inspired to go to school?

- ~56% started researching programs/degrees/generic first
- 30% got input from friends & family

Specific areas of research:
- Prospects first considered:
  - best schools
  - types of degrees
  - online schools
- Next in line:
  - specific degrees
  - course type
  - tuition, financial aid

Source: Ipsos / Google Study (2017)
What Students Are Asking

- Admission Rate
- School Size
- Curriculum
- Financial Aid
- Location
- Course Availability
- Quality of Department Study
- Study Abroad Opportunities
- Safety
- Sports
- Cost
- Quality of Professors
- Freshmen Retention Rate
- Size of Campus
- On Campus Living
- Jobs Right Out of School
- Size of Campus
There Were 7.3B Searches for Colleges & Universities in the Last 12 Months
Be present on your own trade name terms

1. Gain incremental lift in volume
2. Control your brand messaging
3. Defend your brand terms from competition

89% of paid search clicks are incremental to organic clicks
Real estate is even more crucial on mobile

Students enrolled or soon-to-enroll in online academic programs, who conducted “almost all” of their search on mobile (up from 23% two years ago)
Must Have #3: Custom Audience Targeting
Custom Audience Targeting

In addition to the “out of the box” targeting options, Facebook lets you customize your audiences.

Student List
Use your student or prospective student email list to target those specific people while they are on Facebook/Instagram with messaging tailored to their needs.

Lookalike Audiences
A Lookalike Audience is a way to connect with new people who are likely to be interested in your school because they’re similar to your current students and prospects.
Lead Nurturing: Messaging

Digital efforts for lead nurturing should have vastly different messaging and efforts than lead-generation advertising efforts.

**Greater detail** about program and school, with specific focus on the potential student’s needs

Assuage **common concerns** or challenges faced by lead types

Have **CTAs** encouraging users to go further down the funnel
Example Lead Nurturing Effort
ADVANCED LEAD NURTURING FOR HIGHER ED

THE LEAD NURTURING CHALLENGE
Trident University, one of Level Agency’s higher education clients and a leader in the online education, needed another mechanism to increase enrollments and marketing efficiency beyond our core solutions of SEM, paid social, DSP-driven display advertising and mobile-first landing pages. Simply, they needed to go beyond what is considered best practice and drive even better enrollment results.

THE PLAN - BEYOND SIMPLE RETARGETING
Level developed a database driven, true multi-channel/omni-channel digital and direct media plan to reach, engage, and convert or retain prospects and students.

To prove ROI, Level implemented a scientific data hold-out lift study, with the “experiment” group that received the messaging, and a “control” that did not.

The initial study – focusing on increasing the lead-to-enrollment rate (and later the student graduation rate) – would be conducted with strict adherence to this clean control/test group and straightforward scientific method using university-owned empirical data.

THE RESULTS
The nurturing strategy and execution has been a resounding success. Using 45,806 total leads, a randomized 80% of which were exposed to Lead Nurturing efforts, Lead Nurturing resulted in a 60% lift in Lead-to-Start rates, and a 35% lift in Lead-to-Enrollment rates*. The campaign is being expanded to include larger audiences, more rich media, and deeper interactive experiences.

*The student journey is as follows: Lead > Application > Enrollment > Start.

LEAD NURTURING EFFORTS

- 24%  + 60%  + 35%

Lead to Application Rate  Lead to Start Rates  Lead to Enrollment Rates
Growth Drivers: Display and Video
The key is to engage potential students in the **right mindsets**, on the **right channels**, and to enable them to experience all the great things your school has to offer.
Prospects prefer to direct their own journey

- Initial Exploration
- Direct Contact Lead Form
- Pre-Enrollment
- Enrollment

Options:
- Email
- Self-service
- Phone call
Video is where the high-value prospects are

- 83% watch YouTube on average, 3+ times a day
- 51% watch “little to no” TV
- 15M

Students that enroll are 9X more likely to cite digital video as the most influential resource in their decision process (vs. dropouts)

Source: MRI / comScore Fusion (Apr 2018)
Source: Greenberg / Google Research (2018)
Search **captures** people.

Video **moves** people.
In fact, we usually think there is a tradeoff

‘SCIENCE’
GREATER PRECISION
“Performance”

‘ART’
MOST POWERFUL
“Branding”
Digital video influences your prospective student

61% of Early Stage respondents felt Optimistic (Top Emotion)

18% saw increase in Optimism after exposure to Video

+36% in Confident when respondent move from Early to Late Stage

19% saw increase in Confident after exposure to Video

+28% in Enthusiastic and +27% in Excited when respondent move from Late to Enrolled

18% saw increase in Enthusiasm

10% saw increase in Excitement after exposure to video

Source: Greenberg / Google Research (2018)
Summary
Let Us Help You Grow Enrollments

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