

The University of Cincinnati College of Business creates a Student Information System using ACT! E-marketing

Company

We're the Graduate Programs Office in the [University of Cincinnati College of Business](#). We are responsible for recruitment, admission, and student service for students considering our nationally-ranked MBA program or our Master of Science programs in Accounting, Information Systems, Marketing, or Quantitative Analysis, all offering full-time or part-time enrollment. Our primary mission is to identify prospects and move them through the process to become students and (eventually) alums.

Problem

Our office is understaffed and under-budgeted. We consist of 8 people plus 3 student assistants – and we handle a large number of prospective and current students. We receive information about LOADS of prospective students through a variety of methods including they call in, they visit campus, they stop by at our booth at fairs, they submit test scores, etc. We have no system for managing, counting, tracking, and communicating with these prospects. We don't know the effectiveness of our marketing efforts because we are unable to track it. For example, we have no way of knowing how many prospective students we saw at a particular fair, or what happened to those prospective students (did they apply or not, etc). Our budget is prohibitive. We have a large number of international prospective students. Printed material is costly and goes out-of-date very quickly. We can use the information we collect on prospective students to send them a single email or, if they provided a mailing address, to send our expensive printed pieces, but there is no mechanism for following up beyond that.

Solution

Using ACT! 12 with [Swiftpage](#), we created a student information system ("SIS") into which all prospective student information is entered. For example, when we meet a prospective student at a fair, we collect their information (name and email at minimum; ideally capture mailing address & phone, and which of our program(s) they're interested in). If the student calls into the office, we capture the same information into ACT. The same is true for campus visitors, test score submitters, etc.

All information is entered into ACT, a 'Referred By' value is entered into that field, and the prospective student is assigned to a Group indicating how we met them. This allows us to track the effectiveness of various contact methods. We assign the prospective student an ACT ID/Status of "PROSPECT" which automatically adds them to a [Swiftpage Drip Marketing campaign](#). This Drip Marketing campaign, consisting of 6 emails over 30 days followed by a call list for those prospective students for whom we have telephone numbers, helps the student become familiar with our programs and offerings, and gently urges them to move forward – to submit their complete application materials and become a student at University of Cincinnati College of Business.

A prospective student moves through our process via the following ACT ID/Statuses:

- PROSPECT: Constituent has expressed interest in us but has not yet submitted any application materials
- APPLICANT: Constituent has submitted any part of their application (application may or may not be complete)
 - INCOMPLETE: We will develop a nurturing Drip Marketing campaign to encourage prospective students who have started their application to complete it
 - COMPLETE: We will develop a Swiftpage Drip Marketing campaign to keep-in-touch once a students' application is complete

- STUDENT: Student has been accepted into our program
 - OFFERED: Student has been notified of their acceptance but has not yet confirmed their intention to attend
 - CONFIRMED: Student has confirmed their intention to attend
 - We will develop a Swiftpage Drip Marketing campaign to keep-in-touch with a confirmed student – send them a welcome from the dean, a welcome from the academic department, and notification about orientation and other information
- ALUM: Once the student graduates, they're coded as an ALUM
 - We will develop a Swiftpage Drip Marketing campaign for Alums

That's where we are right now. Future enhancements will include Swiftpage Drip Marketing for specific program interest (for example, prospective students interested in MS Accounting need to know some different information than MBA prospective students); we want to create a Drip Marketing campaign for non-responsive prospective students – those prospective students who may become enrolled students in our program with just a bit more encouragement, or prodding.

Results

We're still fairly early in our implementation process, but already, we're receiving great feedback from prospective students that they appreciate the communication. We're able to repeatedly (and automatically!) connect with our prospects with Drip Marketing campaigns instead of one-off blasts. We can track who opens, views, clicks our messages and score them appropriately for follow up. We can track effectiveness of outreach activities for the first time ever. We can measure the effectiveness of our recruitment efforts. Now, I can authoritatively answer the questions of "how many prospective students did we see at this event?", and "what was the admission outcome for attendees of a particular event?"!

We have received an average open rate of 22.9%.

To learn more about the University of Cincinnati College of Business graduate programs, visit <http://business.uc.edu/graduate>