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ENROLLMENT MANAGER

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MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING FOR ENROLLMENT DEVELOPMENT

April J. Clark
Regional Manager
CAS, Marketing Inc.

CAS is a full service direct marketing service bureau that handles all data processing services from direct mail to telemarketing to email marketing.

Direct mail services include list acquisition, list hygiene, database enhancement, letter shop services, data entry and database building.

Telemarketing data processing includes adding telephone numbers to databases and lists, scrubbing lists for "do not call" flagging, eliminating deceased people from databases and other related services.

Email marketing services include providing email prospect lists and broadcasting, appending/adding email addresses to databases, ECOA to update email addresses and handling the broadcast of email messages to your database email addresses.

My goal today is to define each channel, share how to use each channel effectively, discuss measuring results and talk about how colleges and universities can use these channels to build enrollment.

Direct Mail gets your actual marketing piece into the hands of your prospective students. Direct mail success is defined by three components working together: The mailing list, the mail piece itself and the offer. If any one of the three is incorrect, you lose one third of your effectiveness.

It is important to take the time to design an effective mail piece with information on your institution that entices and excites the recipients, resulting in a request for more information or an appointment to see the school. It is imperative to define your goal for the mailing. Disseminating information/educating, inviting a school visit, giving additional information, telling about a single facet of your offerings or an overview of all programs are all options. Design your piece to fulfill your goal.

The mailing list can be an ACT, NRCCUA, CBSS or SAT list aimed at a certain segment of the junior class or the graduating class. The segment must match your goal for this mailing (you may be targeting high achievers or mid-range scorers). On the other hand, you may be testing a geographic area for adults who have some college credits but no degree for a continuation program. In this case the list would be specifically fgeared to a certain age group and education level to generate responses to the offer of degree completion.

The offer is equally important and again must be designed to appeal to your marketing target. It should be designed to catch the attention of the group and tell them what action you wish them to take. If you want them to pick up the telephone and talk to THEIR enrollment representative, then the offer must clearly instruct them to do so. If you want them to send back a postcard to get their free catalog and free keychain, then the offer must tell them to do so. If they can make more money by finishing their college degree and you want them to call for a *(see Multi-Channel p.2)*

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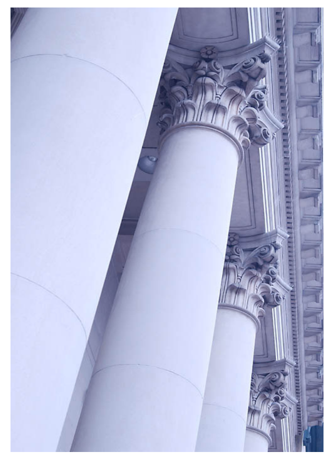

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free sample class schedule, then you must tell them what to do and how to do it. We have all received mail pieces that told a great story but never said, "This is how it benefits YOU" or, "This is exactly how you can get involved." You do not want to fall into the trap of getting so wrapped up in your story that you forget to ask them to do what you wish they would!

There are direct marketing "words" that can make or break your piece – whether you are marketing for a non-profit or for-profit. Use good words like: FREE (the most powerful attention-getter) ,YOU (lets your prospect know they are important), SAVE (time or money), NOW (creates urgency in decision making or response time), and EASY (what everyone wants – easy to register online, easy to get answers, etc.). Don't be afraid to incorporate the tried and true. Avoid bad words like COST, PAY (try "and you get all this for…"), CONTRACT and BUY in your piece and avoid the conflicting feelings they generate.

The final step is measuring the results of your direct mail in order to adjust and fine-tune your plan. Make sure someone is responsible for collecting and tabulating this information. That person needs to know at a minimum: which mail piece generated the response, the name and address (or a code from the mail piece) of the responder, what element enticed them to respond and the date they responded. When done correctly this can inform the marketing team what lists work for what purposes and then they can tweak the list orders and the content of the mail pieces accordingly.

When the list, mail piece and offer are balanced and match your goals for the mailing, you will succeed and get the response you desire. It is a proven formula for successful direct mail.

Telemarketing is a channel that more and more college and university enrollment departments are using successfully. In many cases they send out the mail piece to prospects and then follow up with a home telephone call. Often the instructions to the prospect in the mail piece or accompanying personalized letter will let them know that a phone call will follow to answer questions or to add to the information. This is about as effective a follow up plan as you can have. It requires a dependable mail house that will get the mail out on time and a trained follow up telemarketing crew that gets across the message you are trying to convey.

Again, this message must be tailored to the target audience you are trying to influence.

Since many colleges and universities are non-profit organizations, they do not come under the "Do Not Call" federal regulations. As responsible community citizens, many institutions preface their conversation with the prospect with a respectful request to talk. When you seek to add telephone numbers to your purchased list, you may have the service bureau "flag" or identify any "Do Not Call" telephone numbers. That way your telemarketers are aware of the recipients' preference.

The telemarketing channel can be used very effectively in conjunction with direct mail. Phones are also an effective "warning device" to let recipients know to look for your mail piece. You can either leave a voice message before the mail piece arrives saying, "Please watch for an exciting mailer to arrive in the next couple of days…." or you can make actual calls to talk to the prospects.

This prepares your prospects to "feel" expectation when the mailer arrives. They are subconsciously expecting it and welcome it because they "know" it is coming. This multi-channel marketing method also may work well for you. The key as always is to test, test, test to find out your best combination of channels. Be sure to measure the results of the telemarketing campaign so you know without a doubt which channel works for your message.

Email Marketing is a natural addition to your communication plan. Today's high school students are technically savvy; they email, text and IM as normal ways of communication. If you include email in your marketing arsenal, you will find they respond well to it. The big challenge is first capturing correct email addresses and second keeping the addresses updated. The process of adding emails to your database is fairly simple but can be expensive if you have a small database because of project minimums. If you are part of an association of schools, you may be able to combine databases with other schools and run one job. If you join with other schools that are not looking for the same prospects then perhaps there would not be a conflict. Each school can upload their database separately to the service bureau in a standard format. The service bureau can "key code" each database, format them and combine them together. After the append is complete, the job is split by key code and returned to each school. *(see Multi-Channel p.3)*

MULTI-CHANNEL CONTINUED:

The key is to analyze your response to the emails and how many students you anticipate enrolling, then compare the cost; if it makes sense proceed to the append. You should run your email database through ECOA (Email Change of Address) to keep it cleansed. We recommend this be done every six months, which on average will update 15% of your addresses.

The creative component of the email message must capture the attention of the recipient in the subject line. Most unexpected emails are deleted after one second (or less) of consideration. The value of multi-channel marketing in the "email open war" means they have received a mail piece, gotten some sort of phone message or call and now they will recognize your email and open rather than delete it. That is another requirement of multi-channel marketing – branding consistency between your different channels. If you send a mail piece, make a call or send an email message, all communication sent from your institution must have a common thread throughout. It might be the same colors. It might be the same tag line used in the mail piece, the voice message and the subject line of the email message. You will use this constant to brand your marketing.

One value of multi-channel marketing is your prospective student will indicate with which channel he/she is most comfortable. This information will become part of that person's database record. If you have a prospect respond via email, perhaps a return message asks, "Would you rather communicate with us via email?" The person will let you know. Then future communications may center on the email channel. This is valuable and cost-effective information for your marketing department to track.

Blogging and Twitter are two additional channels that today's college prospects appreciate. Here are some definitions that may help you decide if a marketing "Blog" or "Micro-blogging" or "Twitter" are channels you want to utilize.

Microsoft's Encarta Encyclopedia defines blogging as the frequent, chronological publication on the Web of personal thoughts and opinions for other Internet users to read. The name, coined in the late 1990s, derives from "Web logging." The product of blogging is known as a "blog." There are millions of blogs on the Internet. In addition to thoughts and opinions, many bloggers also use their blogs to recommend books, music and links to other sites on the World Wide Web. Blogging predates the late 1990s. People kept blogs long before the term was coined, but the trend has gained momentum with the introduction of automated publishing services.

Tens of thousands of people use these services to publish their blogs. Among the notable publishing services are Radio and Blogger, which was bought by the Internet search company Google in February 2003. MSN offers a blogging service known as MSN Spaces.

The form of a blog is very much dependent on the institution that keeps it. Most blogs are a mix of what students and prospective students report when they participate in your blog and how they feel about things they see on the Web. In this respect, they are a kind of hybrid diary and guide, although there are as many unique types of blogs as there are people who keep them. The popularity of blogging has given rise to a number of tools that can remind you about blogs you read or that generate more views of your blog.

Universities set up blogs to share information about their schools. Current students comment on life in the dorms, the administration, the registration process, etc. Your prospects can be directed to the university blog to see these comments and to find out information on their own. It is very personal and very interactive. It may or may not be a channel your marketing department wants to pursue. Although primarily for personal expression, there is a trend to use blogs as an informal discussion medium. Some schools have used blogs to provide a forum for discussion of new ideas and products. You can see how unedited blog discussions between your current students and prospective *(see Multi-Channel p.4)*

MULTI-CHANNEL CONTINUED:

students can lead to relationships that bring students to your school.

Stephan Spencer in the August issue of *MultiChannel Merchant* defines Twitter as an off-shoot of blogging: " Twitter is micro-blogging – the practice of making frequent, short, unedited, unrefined message posts. Twitter refers to these as "tweets". As blogging matures and bloggers take their work more seriously, blog posts have become longer and more burdensome to produce. Thus was born the micro-blogging subculture – part blog engine, part social network." He also says that Twitter starts with sending out updates but can also be used to engage other Twitter users. Businesses use Twitter to pass on links to interesting web pages to clients or colleagues, to meet or keep in touch. Colleges and universities who have embraced the world of Twitter use it to share web sites and other academic links with students and prospective students. It takes some skill, but you can promote new classes, new offerings, special programs and various other happenings in a way that does not sound like promoting the school but imparting information.

The first step to getting started with Twitter is to go to www.twitter.com and register. After that the rest is up to your marketing department. Track keywords to discover if a certain segment of your prospective students will respond positively to this channel in your enrollment process.

How do you tie all these channels together to increase the effectiveness of your enrollment marketing? The best way is to thoroughly investigate each channel and assess its value to your overall marketing plan. You may already use direct mail and telemarketing and may want to add some email marketing by asking your prospective students to provide you with their email addresses and permission to communicate that way. You can start slowly and gauge the level of interest. As for blogging and Twitter – talk to your current students. See how excited they are about the prospects of a university blog. Perhaps work with a committee of students who already communicate in these channels. Be sure to oversee what they plan and make sure the blog they envision is appropriate to your overall program. You need to educate yourselves in these new channels or risk being left behind.

We find that having a number of channels available to your prospective students allows them to choose the method of communication that is most comfortable for them. When their comfort level increases, there is a higher chance that your school will be high on their list of choices!

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR FINANCIAL AID SEASON IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET?

John W. Dysart
President
The Dysart Group, Inc.

Everyone says they understand the importance of financial aid in the enrollment management process. As the costs of higher education continue to climb, most pay at least lip service to the vital role of financial aid. Unfortunately, many speak of it but few have really examined their own aid policies and procedures to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of current and prospective students and their families.

- Have your current paper requirements been seriously evaluated to eliminate all necessary forms? If you require more than the FAFSA for students not selected for verification, it is time to take a second look.
- Is the timing of your awards in keeping with the needs of students or the convenience of the Financial Aid Office? If you have not already started awarding new AND continuing students, it is time to reconsider.
- Is the burden of applying for aid on time and submitting required paperwork placed on the backs of students, or on your Financial Aid Office? If your Aid Office is not being held accountable for application and folder completion rates, it is time to change your thinking.
- Do you have in place weekly financial aid reports that not only track expenditures, but track success in encouraging new and returning students to apply for aid early and complete folders to facilitate disbursement? If not, then you are not tracking the financial aid process in a manner that facilitates recruitment and retention. *(see Financial Aid Season p.5)*

Financial Aid Season Continued:

If your enrollment management team cannot answer yes to the previous questions, you are really not prepared for financial aid season.

First and Ten, Do It Again

Marcia Nance
President
InterimWin, Inc.

Does anyone else identify an eerie similarity between higher ed enrollment VPs and NFL head coaches? It seems like the same NFL head coaches simply rotate among teams. Not unlike head coaches in the NFL, the same group of enrollment VPs in higher ed seem to rotate among colleges and universities. It is next to impossible for an individual who has not been a head coach or VP to break into the ranks of either of these exclusive clubs. If someone is willing to take a chance on the unproven head coach as was evidenced this year in the NFL with rookie head coaches who are already experiencing success, the door opens for others. Is that door as open to untested entry level enrollment VPs in the higher ed arena?

University enrollment VPs and their staffs, not unlike head coaches and coaching staffs of NFL teams, are charged with running an operation like a business in addition to what is the more obvious or perceived purpose of their work. For the NFL coach, bringing a team together, developing cohesion and matching individual and team talent to winning offenses and defenses is aligned awkwardly with the business concepts of bottom-line profit/loss and managing the salary cap. So, even the best team member as broadly defined to include alignment with values and individual attitude, may be released because of salary cap or profit/loss calculations. The primary expectation for the NFL coach is not necessarily to develop the best TEAM, but to develop the most entertaining and winning program. It is no longer really about how the game is played – it is about winning and losing…more specifically winning.

For the enrollment VP, the grand purpose of matching individual student needs and expectations with institutional opportunities is often overshadowed by a requirement for numbers and resultant revenue. It may not be as much about how well students and colleges match up as it is about how many students you can get in the door….even better, how many full pay students are among the new recruits.

While NFL coaches are charged with filling the seats in stadiums, enrollment VPs are charged with filling the seats in classrooms. Both must accommodate fickle audiences and both must manage special interest groups like booster clubs and legacy programs.

The reality is both NFL head coaches and enrollment VPs are involved in big business that requires making decisions and executing on plans that can make or break organizations and institutions. No wonder it is hard to consider putting an unproven (meaning having never held the position before) person in charge. Inevitably the same group of proven leaders are recruited and rotated through position after position.

It appears we are ready as a country to support leadership that demonstrates more possibility than direct experience. Perhaps it is time also for higher ed to open its doors to new blood in the enrollment VP arena. I believe there are a lot more qualified and untapped professionals out there who can bring new energy and ideas to the enrollment game. They have learned admissions in the trenches and are ready to learn the business of higher ed enrollment. Here's my thought. They just need a little mentoring to develop that side of their experience base. What some of us who have been in the profession for a while and are part of that rotating group could do is actively mentor new enrollment VPs.

I want to give back to higher education. I want my next best self to weave my values into my work more openly. To that end I have been fortunate enough to be able to create my own business which I have named InterimWin. The main purpose of InterimWin is to provide interim executive leadership while colleges and universities search for their next strategic hires. In addition, I provide, through InterimWin, mentoring for new enrollment VPs. I believe I can teach new VPs how to successfully take on senior-level management and the business of higher ed enrollment. I believe with coaching they can become their next best administrative selves and I can give back to higher education!

You can contact Marcia Nance by visiting her website at www.interimwin.com.

Pro-Active Enrollment Management Intervention in Uncertain Economic Times

John W. Dysart
President
The Dysart Group, Inc.

The United States is facing one of the most significant economic downturns in recent history. It is too early to tell how much worse it is going to get, but at a minimum it is likely that most families are very concerned about the national economy and their own financial situations. Uncertainty will create immediate challenges for colleges and universities.

The current economic situation may impact college and university retention rates this term. Institutional leaders would be well-served to consider addressing possible attrition issues in the next couple of months.

- While it is always wise to keep an eye on student payment plans, it is more important now than ever. Business officers and financial aid professionals should be monitoring student accounts closely and be prepared to offer solutions to currently enrolled students whether they appeal for assistance or not.
- If there was ever an appropriate time to move up the pre-registration process for currently enrolled students, it is NOW. Front load the registration process for the next term as early in the semester as possible. Eliminate unnecessary barriers to registration for your students.
- You may wish to be more cautious than usual when determining price increases for the coming year. While tuition freezes are not recommended, improve communication when notifying currently enrolled students and their families of any increase in cost and include viable options for meeting increased costs including flexible payment plans, federal and alternative loans and even the possibility of institutional work or grant funds.

No one knows whether we have hit bottom or how long the economic downturn will continue. College and university leaders should ensure they are doing everything possible in the short term to facilitate the retention of currently enrolled students.

Congratulations to Manchester College in North Manchester, Indiana for increasing freshmen enrollments this year by 25%! This constitutes the largest freshmen class in more than a quarter of a century.

Best Wishes For a New Year Of Health, Happiness And Prosperity!

Proven Retention Tactics that Everyone Talks about but Few Implement

- Ensure that faculty take attendance every day and establish a mechanism to report students who do not attend class.
- Test or quiz within the first ten days of class for all courses enrolling new students, especially freshmen.
- Package currently enrolled students as soon as they apply for financial aid. Do not wait until the end of the Spring term.
- Identify "at-risk" students prior to the beginning of each year and monitor their early progress.
- Review teaching methods and attitudes to see if they are tailored to serve the students the institution historically enrolls.
- Closely monitor payment plan compliance for all students on a weekly basis. Intervene as soon as outstanding balances begin to accrue rather than waiting until the end of the term.
- Take a hard look at academic advisement. Ensure that professionals advising students are well trained, understand academic and financial aid policies, are versed in remedial education and realize the impact of courses within a term and the timing and scheduling of courses for new students. High school students are used to structured classes five days per week.
- Pay attention to date of application and date of deposit for newly enrolled students. Late applicants and students who deposit late are likely to be attrition risks.

The Dysart Group, Inc. is proud to announce the opening of its new offices and conference facilities in the historic Tryon Plaza Building in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Tryon Plaza
112 South Tryon Street, Suite 760
Charlotte, NC 28284

Enrollment Manager

Dwyer Education Strategies, Inc.

210 North Church Street, # 2315

Charlotte, NC 28202

dwyereducation@aol.com

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U.S. POSTAGE
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