

ENROLLMENT MANAGER

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A NEW SOURCE OF REVENUE? WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY DEDICATES THE LARGEST SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY IN THE COUNTRY

Alan Braslow
Managing Director
Executive Outcomes, LLC

William Paterson University has dedicated a solar energy installation on its campus in Wayne, New Jersey that is the largest solar facility at a university in the nation. It is expected to save millions of dollars in energy costs for the University while supplying 15 to 20 percent of the institution's energy needs.

This project will enable WPU to save an estimated \$4.3 million in energy costs over the next 15 years, while also reducing their carbon footprint. By formulating a public-private partnership to develop this project, *with no capital costs to the University*, this move is a revenue generator.

The installation will be capable of supplying 3.5 megawatts of clean, low-cost energy. The first 3-megawatt phase has been completed; a second 500-kilowatt phase is scheduled to go online in 2011.

The project was developed through a public-private partnership between a leading independent solar power producer and a solar power system integrator. The entire project is privately financed and will be owned and

operated under a 15-year power purchase agreement. The University will buy the solar power at a reduced rate with no up-front costs.

One key concept that has led to the success of this project is the public and private partnership, without which this project would not have been completed.

The solar parking lot canopies that were designed and installed at William Paterson University offer a unique solution to limited ground and rooftop space, while delivering an efficient system that is going to save the university millions of dollars in energy costs.

To keep the campus informed about the University's energy savings, a kiosk, to be located in the Science Building, will constantly display the amount of energy produced by the solar panels and the concurrent savings accrued in real time.

William Paterson University has made a strong commitment to energy conservation. The institution recently received a \$1.2 million federal grant to upgrade the controls for the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems on campus. As of June 2007, the University is a charter signatory in the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), a national initiative with a goal of carbon neutrality at member institutions. The University is also certified under the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Stewardship program, became an EPA Waste Wise Partner and was recognized by the New Jersey Higher Ed Partnership for sustainability with an Energy and Climate Action Award for meritorious achievement.

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THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED
ON 100% RECYCLED PAPER.

A NEW SOURCE OF REVENUE? CONTINUED:

William Paterson University is one of the nine state colleges and universities in New Jersey. It offers more than 250 undergraduate and graduate degree programs through five colleges: Arts and Communication; Cotsakos College of Business; Education; Humanities and Social Sciences; and Science and Health. Located on 370 hilltop acres in Wayne, the University enrolls more than 11,200 students and provides housing for nearly 2,300 students.

To learn how your institution can do the same as WPU contact: Alan Braslow, Managing Director, Executive Outcomes LLC, at 856-229-7646 or Alan@execoutcomes.com

IT IS FINANCIAL AID TIME!

John W. Dysart
President
The Dysart Group, Inc.

It is the first month of the new year and it is time to send financial aid award letters. Check with your Director of Financial Aid and ensure that award letters for Fall 2011 are already being sent to both new and returning students.

I am amazed at the number of colleges and universities that have not made early financial aid processing a campus priority. Showing students and their families how they can afford to attend or re-enroll at your institution is critically important. This has always been true as the cost of higher education continues to escalate. It is, perhaps, more important than ever given economic uncertainty, high unemployment rates, market declines and cuts in state funding.

- Make sure that award letters are being sent and accept no excuses for delay.
- New tuition rates do not have to be announced in order to package students.
- Software delays can be overcome by manual packaging.
- There is no need to delay packaging for students selected for verification.
- There is no need to wait for the publication of Spring grades in order to award currently enrolled students.

See to it that your Financial Aid Office is being proactive in encouraging all students, new and returning, to apply for financial aid.

- Written reminder letters should be mailed encouraging families to complete the FAFSA.
- Email messages can be utilized in addition to letters or postcards.
- Many Financial Aid Offices are having success using text messaging to encourage students to apply for financial aid.
- Telephone calls should be placed to currently enrolled students and admission applicants who have not applied for financial aid.

Challenge your Financial Aid Office to streamline the process of applying for financial aid.

- Eliminate institutional financial aid applications.
- Cease requiring tax returns of anyone not selected for verification.
- Do not require students to return signed award letters.

This is a critical time for students and families. Understand that financial aid is going to play an important role in determining who enrolls and who re-enrolls at your institution. Ensure that you are doing everything possible to facilitate the application process for all of your students.

FIVE COMMON REASONS WHY COLLEGE STUDENTS DROP OUT

Louise Baker
Zen College Life

College is the best time of many people's lives, but for some the dream turns into a nightmare. There are a variety of reasons why this might occur, but here are five of the most common:

No Support System

1. Some colleges offer students a meager support system. As a result, students feel alone, homesick and confused, and they believe they have nowhere to turn. Many drop out; an unfortunate result considering many could suc-

FIVE COMMON REASONS CONTINUED:

ceed if they had professor and student mentors. These students could be retained if colleges instituted more aggressive "welcome programs" and advised students of all the resources on campus. This support should continue throughout his or her college career and a concerned professor, faculty mentor, or guidance counselor should be always accessible.

Finances

2. College is very expensive and many students simply cannot afford it. Financial aid doesn't stretch as far as it used to, even when students are willing to take out 5-figure loans. Many try to take on part- or full-time jobs, but they eventually burn out, sacrificing school in the process. These students would indeed stay if tuition were lower or financial aid were more plentiful.

Unprepared for College Work

3. Unfortunately, many students aren't equipped by their high schools to do college level work. As a result, they drop out after a semester or two of profound struggles and academic probation. This is a hard issue for colleges to deal with, as they can only manage what they are given. Colleges shouldn't be expected to teach students what they should have learned in high school, but they can acknowledge students' troubles by offering more remedial classes, extra help programs and other tools that can help students catch up and succeed. In addition, universities can make sure that they hold firm to their

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admissions standards in order to keep chronically underperforming students out of the system.

Personal and Family Troubles

4. Sometimes personal or family problems prevent students from finishing. A student can get ill, or a parent could lose a job or pass away, forcing the student to quit his or her degree program. Unfortunately, it is difficult for a school to prevent these life events. The best colleges can do is provide students with the support they need. They can also offer to keep a space open for them at the school for a certain period of time in the hope that the student will return to finish his or her degree.

Poor Fit

5. Sometimes a school is a poor fit for a student. Despite their best efforts, students come to campus and realize that they actually don't feel at home. Whether it's due to a wrong major, homesickness, or cultural issues, sometimes the choice just simply wasn't the right one. To maximize retention, colleges and universities can make sure students are familiar with

FIVE COMMON REASONS CONTINUED:

the campus's student life and academics before they enroll.

Louise Baker blogs about getting an [online degree](#) at Zen College Life. Her most recent post looked at the [top 10 nursing schools](#).

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A HIGH SCHOOL VISIT

Tracey Dysart-Ford
Director of Guidance and College Counseling
Immaculate Conception High School

I have spent 6 months on the “other side of the desk.” After 22 years in college admissions, I now have a great opportunity to be a high school college counselor. This journey of changing careers in my mid-forties has been challenging. Seeing things from the eyes of students and parents versus seeing things as an admission professional has been interesting and informative. The experience has enabled me to take a step back and re-evaluate some of my former assumptions.

We are coming to the end of the fall travel season. While working in college admissions, I always tried keeping up to date with technology in order to use the latest communication mechanisms to attract tech savvy students. I still think it is important to do this, but I now have a new respect for the traditional high school visit. Technology is definitely useful, but never underestimate the power of the high school visit.

As an admissions professional, I often wondered about the effectiveness of the high school visit. If we could chat online, text and use Twitter and Facebook to appeal to students across the globe, why spend money on travel? This year as a college counselor, I see the value more than ever.

Admission counselors who are trained to articulate the strengths of the college or university and able to explain what differentiates your institution can make a big difference. We had one representative from a college half-way across the country come to visit this year. This particular college was not on the short list for any of my seniors. This representative, however, made such a compelling presentation, that three of my students are now applying for admission this fall and one is flying to visit the school next month. The applica-

tions and the scheduled campus visit are a direct result of the counselor visiting my high school.

I have seen the positive influence of several representatives who made students excited about their institution and either encouraged or reaffirmed interest as a result of a 30-minute presentation. What differentiates *effective* high school visits is training. You can definitely see the benefits of good training and preparation.

There is certainly a downside in continuing to visit high schools. Travel is expensive. It may be hard to dedicate scarce budget resources to travel at a time when many admission offices are being asked to scale back expenses. Travel means more time out of the office. Admission counselors who are on the road are not available to meet visitors to campus and cannot assist with daily office operations. Admission professionals must be more careful than ever in determining which high schools to visit. Often, counselors find that they are not able to meet with students one-on-one or not able to make presentations to groups of students when visiting high schools. Given the expense, time constraints and the reality that not all high schools are accommodating to visitors, admission leaders must be prudent in scheduling high school visits. This does not mean, however, that such visits should cease altogether.

There are still many high school administrators who appreciate colleges and universities willing to make the time and invest the funds necessary to visit our campuses. Students often benefit from the one-on-one experience. The high school visit can provide valuable information on schools that students may not have found online. Sometimes, traditional recruitment tactics can work and one should never underestimate the power of a high school visit.

SEARCH STRATEGIES IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET

Dr. Doug Spadaro, Ph.D.
President
Premier Communications

Mr. David Waggoner, M.A.
Vice President
Premier Communications

Today's high school juniors and seniors (and increasingly, sophomores) are inundated with literature from hundreds of colleges and universities. This article explores the various search strategies, methods and materials that make a

SEARCH STRATEGIES IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET CONTINUED:

search more effective and efficient.

A typical high school student will receive mailings and e-mails from scores of colleges and universities throughout their high school career. The mailings, almost universally, consist of either a letter from the Admissions office, in a brightly colored envelope with the institution's name and logo prominently displayed. Or, in some cases, more aggressive (and over-budgeted) marketing consists of an expensive viewbook or brochure. The e-mails are usually generated on a "one-size-fits-all" basis that attempts to capitalize on the internet marketplace, but rarely succeeds.

The end result? Mass mailings usually end up unopened in a landfill. E-mails, if not carefully administrated, end up being caught by a spam filter such as those routinely used by AOL, cable internet providers, etc. Even if an e-mail successfully reaches a student's inbox, it is usually deleted by the student as unrecognized before it is even opened.

Premier Communications routinely uses actual high school students who save all of their incoming college mail for our evaluation. When the students deliver their "bags" to us every month, we invariably find that 99% of the mail is unopened. Why? "It is the same old junk," is the typical answer.

On the other hand, when we ask why a certain piece was opened and considered, the usual answer is, "They really seemed to know who I am and what I want to do." Again, consider how your mail might be viewed by a typical student. Is it mass produced with an ink jet address? Is it on your college letterhead like everyone else's? Does it really indicate to the student that you know specific information about them, or is it a universal letter that can apply to anyone?

It is not surprising, then, that search response rates have plummeted. Despite this trend, Premier does see significant opportunities for institutions that use their searches and search budget in a well thought out manner. Although there are numerous private organizations that collect high school student data, we remain committed to our client's use of the College Board (SAT) and the Educational Opportunity Service (ACT) as the mainstay of their recruiting efforts. While the private data firms collect data on ALL high school students, SAT and ACT are a self-selected group of students that are actually planning on going for-

ward with their higher education. Students that pay the test administration fee and actually undergo the stress of taking the exam are obviously serious about their college plans. So, in a limited budget environment, it makes sense to use one or both of the testing services that account for virtually 100% of all college-bound students.

Search design, although tedious, must be done in a thoughtful manner. Both the College Board and EOS have numerous student characteristics to help you refine your search parameters. The first step in designing an effective search is to clearly define the goals of the enrollment area as enumerated by the college community. Once these goals are defined, they must be realistically assessed based on current student demographics and the institution's ability to provide a fit with potential candidates. For example, if the majority of your enrolled students are "B" average students in high school, does it really make sense for you to expend your scarce search budget on attempting to recruit "A+" students? This is a matter of managing expectations within the campus community. Premier believes that improvements in student quality can best be made incrementally in small and affordable steps.

For example, all of our long-term clients have moved well beyond the basic global search technique to the point where they are systematically refining their search parameters on an ongoing basis. These refinements include emphasizing specific modestly higher GPA and exam scores, expanding geography, expanding diversity, or implementing new majors and programs. As such, Premier routinely performs "what-if" scenarios for these clients using actual search data.

Consider the picture below of actual college recruitment literature as photographed and posted on Twitter by a high school senior:



Does one mailing piece catch your attention more than the other "huddled masses?" The piece that you are focusing on was designed and produced by Premier based on a compre-

SEARCH STRATEGIES IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET CONTINUED:

hensive search plan developed with our client – a large east-coast private university. By utilizing all of the student characteristics made available by the College Board, we were able to target in on a specific group of students that were likely to go to this university, could be successfully admitted to this university, and could find a major at this university in their anticipated field of study. In this case, that major was in the health professions. Further, by combining SAT data with our own demographic databases, we could also determine that this student could *afford* to attend this university. This was all done during the search design process, before any budget was expended on production and mailing costs.

This search piece, in relative terms, is inexpensive. Obviously, it is less than a viewbook or brochure and may often be less than many of the color-laden envelopes that you see in the picture. Yet despite its cost-effectiveness, it does emphasize to the student, “We know who you are and what you are about!” This particular client uses 7 versions of a personalized variable data printing (VDP) card based on major. Premier has clients that utilize up to 20 versions of variable data printing in their searches based on majors, gender, interests, etc. In other words, we use specific student characteristics to both design the search for our clients and then to produce the mailing medium as well.

Variable digital printing also permits personalization of the copy on the back of the cards on the basis of factors such as intended major, geography, gender, scholarship ability, etc. In addition, the postcards incorporate a personal URL (PURL), e.g., David.Waggoner.MyPremierMailUSA.com which combines the recipient’s first and last name and a domain connoting your institution. This personalization generates a novelty factor that further enhances response rate. When the PURL is keyed into a browser, a personalized website opens. This website provides information about your institution and includes an Information Request Contact Form that can be submitted via the Internet. Premier records all visits to the PURL site, matches them with the student search record and supplies them to the client for follow up.

It appears as though the college recruiting cycle keeps moving earlier and earlier in the student’s high school career. Both SAT and ACT offer the ability to purchase sophomore high school student names. Several of our clients take ad-

vantage of this, however, most continue to start the recruiting cycle in earnest when the student reaches the junior level in high school. Regardless of whether or not you choose sophomores or juniors, you **MUST** have a communications plan in place to stay in touch with these students after the initial contact. Searching a sophomore student only makes sense if you have a plan to regularly communicate with them throughout the remainder of their high school career. You might even do more harm than good by contacting a sophomore via a search and then ignoring them for a year or more until your regular communication flow begins.

Premier has developed comprehensive communication strategies that begin at both the sophomore and junior high school levels. We have found the key to be the pace at which student contact is made. When we start a student in the recruiting cycle as a sophomore, we communicate with them less frequently than if they are started as a junior – but we do communicate. The pace picks up so that in their senior year they are receiving information from our clients in various forms two or three times per month.

Finally, all student search services offer the ability to customize searches based on numerous student parameters such as geography, major interest, sports and extra-curricular preferences, educational goals and grades and scores. Additionally, Premier has developed a search technique that allows us to determine an individual student’s scores and grades directly from the search data. This technique has proven invaluable in offering our clients the ability to discuss specific scholarships and awards available to the student in the initial search mailing, so as to catch the students’ and their parents’ attention. We have found that the ability to communicate financial incentives at the beginning of the recruiting cycle dramatically improves search results.

Premier has also pioneered the use of using student search parameters specific to the goals of the college and the particular majors offered. For example, one of our clients has an undergraduate program that is unique and nationally recognized. As we design their search, we target a national audience for that program with different GPA and test-score criteria than for their other programs where geography may play the most important role in a student’s college choice. Many of our clients also have as a goal increased diversity on campus. By careful manipulation of the search criteria, we are able to meet this objective.

The media abounds with news stories, magazine articles and books about the college selection process. At the same time,

SEARCH STRATEGIES IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET CONTINUED:

parents and high school counselors are pushing students to consider college at an earlier age. Consequently, high school students today are more savvy consumers than in earlier generations. They realize overtly expressing interest in an institution is often the prelude to a barrage of letters, brochures and phone calls from personnel in the Admission Office – an outcome they are eager to avoid. The result is what has come to be known as the Stealth Marketplace. They're out there, and they're interested, but they're in no hurry to make you aware of their interest. Instead students are more likely than ever before to spend a long time researching your institution – on the Internet, via college resource guides, on social networking sites, etc., - before they contact you. In fact, one current Premier client informed us recently that fully a third of their Fall 2010 enrolled freshman class had been mailed a search piece by Premier, but did not respond. Then, the first contact to the college initiated by the student was an application for admission!

Under these circumstances, relying exclusively on the traditional admission funnel with its focus on building an inquiry pool and cultivating this group to generate applications and enrollments is obviously an outmoded, losing strategy. While inquiries remain one's best source of enrolled students they can't be one's only source. Perceptive enrollment management professionals – those meeting their enrollment targets – have adopted the strategy of contacting Search non-responders numerous times as a means of supplementing those enrollments produced from the inquiry pool. Unfortunately, repeated direct mail campaigns is an expensive approach when one's target group numbers in the tens of thousands and even when telephone numbers are available the common practice of screening calls makes it difficult to reach prospective students via the phone. Email is thus the most budget friendly, pro-active strategy for cultivating the non-responders pool.

The downside to email as a standalone search strategy is that unrecognized or unanticipated email is often suspected of being SPAM and deleted before it's opened. Therefore, depending on email alone as a Search mechanism or as a means of cultivating non-responders is an ineffective strategy. However, as noted above, Premier's personalized postcards are a unique Search strategy that make it more likely our clients will cut through mailbox

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clutter and create name recognition and a positive first impression; and HTML email received after name recognition has been created is much more likely to be opened and read and produce a positive result. In other words, combining personalized postcards and HTML email is a winning strategy! Clients who have adopted this strategy achieve the complimentary objectives of generating inquiries with both the initial postcard campaign and each of the follow-up emails, and cultivating the non-responders who constitute the Stealth marketplace in a cost effective fashion.

For more information about incorporating personalized imagery and systematic HTML email follow-up into your student Search and recruitment efforts please feel free to contact us at Premier.

Premier Collegiate Communications was founded in 1992 by college administrators who recognized the need for specialty communications in the admissions arena. Mass marketing techniques were viewed as ineffective as they often did not reflect the quality of the institution, the personal nature of the admissions process, nor the importance of each potential candidate. In response to these issues, Premier pioneered the use of personalized communications via multiple channels along with a consistent schedule of communication tailored to each student. Premier provides its customers a unique combination in admissions marketing, as we are able to design, produce and physically or electronically mail all of the communications required by college admissions professionals. This provides a "one-stop shop" for admissions where the responsibility for the effectiveness of communications is concentrated in one vendor, rather than spread out among many firms that often have competing goals.

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