

Stay Top of Mind in a Competitive Market

Strategies that amplify your story and attract hard-to-reach students

In the digital age, effective marketing strategies are crucial to the success of any business. This is especially true in the higher education degree space. Online and hybrid learning have become increasingly popular options for students—dramatically increasing an institution's capacity and compounding existing pressure on marketing and recruiting costs. At the same time, more and more learners are working professionals, first-generation students, and underrepresented populations, making it even harder to reach them all with traditional approaches.

A successful strategy starts with a thorough understanding of the challenges your prospective students encounter and the information they have access to when choosing programs and schools. We've put together a list of questions to help you identify your university's specific challenges and possible solutions through a proactive and data-driven approach.

1. Understanding your target audience

Have you homed in on the key demographics for your online degree program? How are you tailoring your marketing and recruitment strategies to meet their specific needs and preferences? What mechanisms do you have in place to gather insights from successfully enrolled or graduated students?

2. Unlocking the power of the landscape

Can you identify any emerging opportunities in the online education market that your institution could capitalize on? How are you integrating these insights into your strategic planning?

3. Leveraging brand identity

How does your institution distinguish itself from others with similar program offerings? What are the points of distinction of your degree options for hard-to-reach populations? How are these articulated in your marketing communications?

4. Personalized Communication

How are you leveraging personalized messaging to connect with your ideal potential students and drive engagement? Have you explored the impact of personalized communication on student enrollment and conversion rates?

5. Data-driven decisions

Do you use data analytics to inform your marketing and recruitment strategies and to track their effectiveness? How accessible and turnkey are the current systems or tools in regularly monitoring and evaluating data in a timely manner?

6. Operationalizing improvements

How often do you evaluate and reassess your marketing plans? What factors influence this cadence? What does your process to implement new strategies and tactics and measure efficacy look like? How regularly do you audit your recruitment ecosystem to identify trends and adapt strategies in line with changing user behaviors, optimizing marketing, and enrollment performance?

A Spotlight on Channel Mix

When it comes to paid digital media, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. It's important to carefully consider which channels will be most effective in reaching your target audience. This will depend on factors such as their online behavior, learning preferences, and degree/program you are offering.

It's also important to diversify your channel mix to reach a wider audience and increase the chances of conversions. A good mix may include a combination of search, social media, display, and video ads.

Pass Backs

Pass backs refer to the process of passing information from one source to another in order to improve performance and return on investment. For example, if a prospect clicks on a social media ad but does not complete the registration process, you can set up a pass back that will retarget them with a display ad. This triggers another prompt to register, increasing the likelihood of conversion.

A Testing Roadmap

A testing roadmap is a critical component to optimize your marketing efforts. This involves regularly testing and evaluating different channels, strategies, and assets to see what works best.

For example, you may want to test different copy or imagery on social media ads to see which resonates best with your audience. Or, you may want to test different landing page designs for paid search ads to see which drives the most conversions.

Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) Tests

Conversion rate optimization (CRO) tests also serve as key tools. These can involve testing elements such as call-to-action buttons, form fields, and navigation on your website to improve the overall user experience and increase conversions.

Noodle deploys strong technology, constantly tests new approaches, and leverages our network of over 60 global institutions to create new opportunities for cost savings through benchmarking, economies of scale, shared technology and content, and marketing collaboration.

Examples include:

- Rapid development of SEO-driven websites tailored to specific campaigns.
- Cost-effective digital media buying, tightly integrated with recruiting efforts.
- Strategic partnerships with EdAssist and Workforce Edge for corporate tuition assistance programs.
- A novel approach to lifelong learning, providing universities with direct access to students and corporations for non-degree programs.