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Success Through Self Awareness

TypeFocus White Paper

Marketing and Student Recruitment Practices

Benchmark Practices and the TypeFocus *Find Your Match* Program

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Introduction

Colleges realize that a student recruitment program can increase applications and enrollments but if these new students are not well suited for their programs the end result is a higher drop-out rate. According to the data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, the average retention rates for public colleges for the first year of studies are around 50% and the overall graduation rates are often less than 20%. The question that needs to be answered is how to increase student enrollments and student retention at the same time. The TypeFocus *Find Your Match* program achieves this by matching the student's personality preferences and strengths to the program offerings of the college. This accomplishes three objectives for the student.

The TypeFocus *Find Your Match* program is designed to accomplish three objectives for students visiting a client's website. These objectives answer the classic questions every career-seeker has to answer:

- Who am I?   Identify the user's personality preferences and strengths
- Where am I going?   Link these personality insights to career choices
- How will I get there? Provide direct access to programs that will provide the training needed

The outcome of these objectives being met will be:

- Increased clarity and confidence in the students' choice of programs, which results in …
- Decreased need to change programs and therefore quicker graduation, which leads to …
- Cost savings and increased perseverance to graduation

These outcomes create a win-win strategy for the college:

- Students win when they are matched to programs that suit them so the learning process is more enjoyable and efficient; this results in them getting the appropriate training faster so they save on tuition and opportunity costs
- Colleges win because they are meeting their mandates in a way that increases their budgets as between 30-40% of college budgets are based on FTEs and tuition fees

The *Find Your Match* program provides each college with a unique program that is customized to their needs. Each program is unique because the recruitment needs of each college will vary with their recruitment/marketing strategy and resources.

This paper will focus on key issues related to marketing and student recruitment practices with reference to the TypeFocus *Find Your Match* program applications.

Key Marketing Findings for Public Colleges[1]

Top 10 most effective strategies

In order of their ranking – most effective first.

	Four-year Public Colleges	**Two-year Public Colleges**
1	Campus open house events	Encourage prospective students to apply on the admissions Web site
2	Campus visit days for high school students	Academic programs within high schools for student to earn college credits to your institution
3	Encourage prospective students to apply on the admissions Web site	Campus visit days for high school students
4	Weekend visits for high school students	High school visits by admission representatives to primary markets
5	Encourage prospective students to schedule campus visits on the admissions web site	Campus visit events designed for school counselors
6	Community college articulation agreements	Campus open house events
7	Campus visit events designed for school counselors	Admissions decisions "on the spot" in high schools or during campus visits/open houses
8	Using enrolled student in recruitment/marketing	Off-campus meetings or events for high school counselors
9	College-paid trips to campus for prospective students	Television ads
10	Off-campus group meetings for prospective students and/or their parents	Encouraging prospective students to schedule campus visits on the admissions web site.

Application: Most strategies involve an invitation therefore you have to start with the students' contact information ... but most students will not volunteer that information. See page 9 on "secret shoppers."

The *Find Your Match* program creates an engaging personality report for your visitors but they have to give you their contact information to receive it. This approach will increase inquires significantly – as much as 300% over baseline.[2]

Since most strategies are sunk costs (the cost to organize, administer, host and manage an open house or a campus visit remain the same whether there are 10 students or 20 students attending) the key to improved results is making the invitations more appealing. An appealing invitation will be one that meets the students' needs. These needs will entail a personalized message in a communication mode they commonly use with information that is immediately useful: all possible through the *Find Your Match* program.

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[1]Noel-Levitz (2013)*, 2013 marketing and student recruitment practices benchmark report for four-year and two-year institutions*. Coralville, Iowa: Noel-Levitz. Retrieved from: www.noellevitz.com/benchmarkreports
[2] Our first *Find Your Match* client was overwhelmed with the number of inquiries received.

Top five internal operations practices for four-year institutions[3]

1	CRM solutions for managing and tracking recruitment communications, online applications, etc.
2	Admissions funnel tracking to monitor and predict students' incremental rates of movement toward enrollment
3	Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an admitted student enrolling at your institution
4	Using a statistical, analytical approach to determine financial aid award levels by predicting enrollment rates based on award amounts (aka "financial aid leveraging")
5	Content management system (CMS) to update or edit web site content

Application: You cannot manage what you do not have in your database. The *Find Your Match* program will customize the gathering and processing of your visitors' information to suit your unique needs.

Planning and leadership practices highlights for two and four year colleges

Survey Item	Four-year Public		Two-year Public	
	Yes	Yes, and it's of good or excellent quality	Yes	Yes, and it's of good or excellent quality
My institution has a written annual recruitment plan	85.4%	64.6%	60.5%	30.3%
My institution has a written, long-range (at least three-year) strategic enrollment plan	79.3%	52.4%	65.1%	27.9%
My institution has a standing, campus-wide committee that addresses coordinated recruitment planning and implementation across all units	67.9%	40.8%	60.5%	16.3%

Application: TypeFocus has created a *Simplified Strategic Planning Guide[4]* for clients that are beginning the process and would find it helpful to get started in the right direction.

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[3] Not enough data was received to make valid comments for two-year institutions
[4] Request your own copy of the *Simplified Strategic Planning Guide* by email: dave.wood@typefocus.com

Top Five Effective Communication Modes for Marketing for Four-year Public Institutions

Mode of Communication	Very or Somewhat Effective
Publications in general	96.3%
E-mail Communication	93.9%
Recruiting page(s) on the web site	85.0%
Web site optimized for mobile browsers[5]	79.2%
Calling cell phones	67.7%

Top Five Effective Communication Modes for Marketing for Two-year Public Institutions

Mode of Communication	Very or Somewhat Effective
Calling cell phones	75.0%
E-mail Communication	74.4%
Publications in general	73.8%
Recruiting page(s) on the web site	73.7%
Calling home phones	69.7%

Application: Calling cell phones is highly effective for both four-year and two-year colleges so capturing that data and having a plan to follow-up with it should be a part of every college's strategy.

Planning Practices for Public Colleges

Primary basis for identifying most and least effective practices	Four-year College	Two-year College
Outcomes data	73.2%	32.6%
Internal feedback mechanisms	20.7%	44.2%
Student feedback data	6.1%	23.3%

Application: Outcomes data will prove more accurate but they are more difficult to capture. They are easier to capture when evaluative measures are included as part of the overall recruitment plan because they can be built into the day-to-day operations of the recruitment process.

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[5] *Find Your Match* web programs are responsive and therefore optimized for mobile browsers

Key E-Recruiting Practices[6]

Mobile Gap

Only 47% of four-year colleges and 23% of two-year colleges have mobile-optimized sites yet 71% of college-bound high school seniors report having looked at college websites on a mobile phone or tablet. As previously noted, the TypeFocus *Find Your Match* sites are mobile-optimized.

Text Messaging

80% of four-year and two-year colleges do not use text messaging to recruit but 53% of college bound high school juniors and seniors would be willing to receive text messages from a college representative.

Cell Phone Usage

Collection of cell phone numbers (yes/no) and ways they are being used	Four-year public colleges	Two-year public colleges
Yes	80.8%	91.4%
How cell numbers are used among those who indicated yes:		
Calls simply to build a relationship between the caller and the student	57.1%	59.4%
Calls from telecounseling call centers	49.2%	21.9%
Individual text messages	19.0%	12.5%
Notifications of impending deadlines, events, acceptance, etc.	39.7%	34.4%
Mass text messages	19.0%	15.6%
Other	6.3%	3.1%

Applications: Incorporating cell phones into one's strategic recruiting plan is supported by the information listed above.

Web content costs

More than half of four-year public institutions are now spending $50K or more to maintain admissions-specific content and services on their institution's website, a substantial increase from two years earlier when only 22 percent of four-year public institution respondents reported spending at that level. Two-year public college data was insufficient for analysis.

Applications: Web content/resource budgets should be reviewed often as prospective students are engaging in online practices with increasing frequency. If outcomes data reveals a positive cost-benefit analysis for an online recruiting practice, then it warrants asking the question: Should less effective recruiting practices have their budgets re-allocated?

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[6] Noel-Levitz. (2014). *2014 E-recruiting practices and trends at four-year and two-year institutions.* Coralville, Iowa: Author. Retrieved from: www.noellevitz.com/BenchmarkReports.

Funnel Rates[7]

Four-Year Public Colleges

Median Funnel Rates	2014
Conversion rate from inquiry to application (all inquiries)	30%
Conversion rate from inquiry to application (not counting inquiries who made their first contact by submitting an application)	17%
Admit rate from application to admit (all applications)	70%
Admit rate from application to admit (completed applications only)	89%
Yield rate from admission to enrollment	36%

Funnel Data for Four-Year Colleges by Geographic Location

Median Funnel Rates	In-State	Out-of-State	International
Yield rate from admission to enrollment	37%	27%	35%

Applications: Only a fraction of inquiries result in enrollments (30% x 70% x 36% = 7.6%) For every 100 inquiries, less than 8 will eventually become students so if there needs to be some way to prioritize one's inquiries or up to 92% of recruitment follow-up efforts will be wasted.

The *Find Your Match* program will capture and export data in ways that will allow each college to prioritize their inquiries into useful cohorts. For example, one college might rank their inquiries this way:
- Visitors who have identified a program of interest and plan to enrol next semester
- Visitors who have not identified a program of interest and plan to enrol next semester
- Visitors who have identified a program of interest and plan to enrol next year
- Visitors who have not identified a program of interest and plan to enrol next year
- Visitors who have identified a program of interest and plan to enrol in more than a year
- Etc.

[7] Noel-Levitz (2014). 2014 Recruitment Funnel Benchmarks Report for Four-Year Institutions. Coralville, Iowa: Noel-Levitz. Retrieved from www.noellevitz.com/BenchmarkReports. The value of knowing a funnel rate is in predicting enrollments from inquiries and establishing statistical models for planning.

Secret Shoppers - Definition

Secret shoppers are defined as prospective students who are unknown to an admissions office before they submit an application.

The *Find Your Match* program gives "secret shoppers" a reason to provide their contact information – in exchange for this information they receive an excellent personality type report that identifies their preferences and strengths and relates these to the programs your college offers.

Secret Shopper Data

Secret Shopper Data for 2014:
- 35% of first time students are secret shoppers
    - 29% in-state students
    - 43% out-of-state students
    - 72% International students
- 62% of students transferring from another college are secret shoppers

Application: A third of prospects are telling us that they're self-directed consumers who make their decisions based on self-service information sources. In other words, they want to know if your college can meet their needs. The *Find Your Match* program assures them that you can by matching their personality preferences to your programs.

Importance of a Good Web Site Experience – Especially for Secret Shoppers

It is especially true for the secret shoppers as you do not have any other means of reaching out to them.

In a separate 2010 study[8], 24 percent of current, college bound high school seniors reported they had removed a specific college from their list of potential schools because of their experience on the college's Web site. In addition, 65 percent of the students said their opinion of a college improved because of their experience on the college's site.

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[8] Noel-Levitz. (2010). *2010 E-Recruiting Practices and Trends at Four-Year and Two-Year Institutions*. Coralville, Iowa: Author. Retrieved from: www.noellevitz.com/BenchmarkReports.

Benchmark Data and the TypeFocus *Find Your Match* Program

Find Your Match Program Description:

The *Find Your Match* program is fully hosted, branded to match your college web site and fully supported by TypeFocus. A customizable lead capture form is built in allowing lead data to be captured; visitor data is exportable to a CSV file.

- Your college programs will be matched to the personality type of visitors to your website

- Each visitor will have their personality type linked to the appropriate programs at your college

- Each program will have links to your college website for further exploration by the visitor

- Each visitor can ask for more detailed information to be emailed to him/her

- Each visitor will receive a follow-up email with a three-page personality type report

- Additional emails with customized content can be sent at specified times

- All contact data supplied by visitors is available to your administrators in real time

- All contact data is collected at the point of visitor registration and is editable to your needs

- Program content and configuration of website reports are editable to your needs

- Descriptive statistics and a search feature are available to administrators in real time

Fully Customized

Any of the benchmark elements discussed in this paper can be added to your college marketing/recruitment processes including but not limited to the following:
- Marketing strategies:
  - 18 out of the 20 most effective strategies involved some sort of invitation and these invitations can be automated and customized to include the visitor's name, the programs they are interested in, the dates of your open house, links to your social media, links to a sign-up sheet for the next open house, etc.
  - All contact information is customizable to your unique needs
- Operational practices:
  - Data can be exported to your existing CRM software program, Google analytics can be added, etc.
- Planning:
  - Marketing plans and means of measuring their outcomes can be built into the data being captured
- Modes of communication:
  - Automated PDF reports and follow-up emails are standard and captured data can be customized via exported CSV files for your own unique follow-up plans

Recent press release for Red Deer College:

The *Find Your Match* Student Recruitment Campaign Category wins gold.

"We were especially pleased to be recognized among our peers for our work on the recruitment campaign," says Joyce Fox, Director of Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment at RDC. "Our campaign was unique and innovative, and is a fantastic tool for prospective students to learn more about the programs at RDC that suit their personalities."

The website developed for the gold-medal campaign www.rdcmatch.com has been so popular, RDC uses it as an ongoing tool for prospective students.

Recommendations

As Zig Ziglar once said, "You can't do everything at once, but you can do something at once."

Review the ideas in this report to see which ones you could immediately use in your current marketing/recruitment strategy and processes. You can customize the *Find Your Match* registration data (e.g. collecting cell phone numbers, permission to text) to make your strategy easier and more efficient. TypeFocus will customize the data that is captured and create reports that meet your current recruiting needs.

Create a strategic plan. About 54% of four-year colleges and only 18% of two-year colleges have a written annual recruitment plan that they consider to be good or excellent. Even fewer have a long range plan.

The *Find Your Match* program has created a Simplified Strategic Planning Guide to support your planning efforts. This analysis and the goals/objectives they create can be completed within the department currently responsible for student recruitment within a one-day planning session.

A bigger challenge is the creation of a campus-wide recruitment committee to coordinate the implementation details across all departments. Creating this committee and making it work needs a high level of leadership, for example at the VP level, so the ultimate benefits of cooperation are identified and mandated.

One benefit of increased recruitment is the increased cash flow it creates as measured by this simple formula: tuition fees x years of attendance. Most departments have set budgets so it often takes a VP-level decision maker to authorize altered budget lines across more than one department. However, the ROI is tremendous: one additional FTE will pay for the *Find Your Match* program and ten additional FTEs will more than pay for an additional full-time recruiting staff member.

Identifying outcomes is an important element of the strategic plan. Strategic plans lead to *SMART* goals. And *SMART* goals are effective in driving behaviors at the organizational level because what gets measured gets done.

What gets done is important. The TypeFocus *Find Your Match* program, when incorporated into a well-designed recruitment process driven by measurable outcomes that are tied to a strategic plan, creates these positive outcomes:

- Students are matched to programs that suit them so they graduate sooner and persist longer thereby saving on tuition and opportunity costs
- Colleges increase their operating budgets (through increased FTEs) which allows them to add programs to more fully meet their mandate.

Questions?

For further information please contact:
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