HIGHER VOLUME, BETTER QUALITY, COST-EFFECTIVE PROCESSES

HOW MARKETING AUTOMATION BOLSTERED STUDENT ACQUISITION AT A LEADING UNIVERSITY

THE CHALLENGE

Underperforming degree programs, competition from on-line accreditation programs, and geographic limitations required a more contemporary way of marketing to new students

THE UNIVERSITY:

A prestigious, accredited higher education institution with enrollment of nearly 22,000 students. They also offer specialized courses and professional degree programs to Off-Campus and Non-Traditional Students (NTS).

OBJECTIVES:

1: Widen geographic reach
2: Immediately identify the qualified candidates
3: Build a relationship over time
4: Provide real-time desktop alerts to academic advisors

SOLUTIONS:

Step 1: Increase on-line inquiries via web pages

By isolating variables and issuing repeated tests, it was possible to identify specific page elements that could be improved. Ultimately, the institution was able to implement a new page design that was treated for CTA placement, layout of content, and SEO improvements.

Step 2: Automatically - Identify candidate qualifications

The candidate's eligibility to enroll could be determined based on their profile information and segmentation.

- **Eligible** - Profile met all required qualifications
- **Questionable** - Profile met some required qualifications
- **Unqualified** - Profile did not meet qualifications

Step 3: Immediately - Respond to interested candidates

Candidates needed to be contacted at two stages: immediately after submitting an inquiry, and again when building their profile.

- **After submitting an inquiry by phone or through the web, users were immediately entered into an automated marketing program to gather more information for categorization.**

- **Profiles were evaluated and candidates were assigned to a lead quality category.**

- **Specific automated actions were performed based on the recipient's lead quality.**

  - *Fully Qualified:* Sent a message series that guides the student through application

  - *Undetermined:* Administration automatically notified through CRM to follow up by phone with the student

  - *Unqualified:* Sent a message series that instructs the candidate how they can meet pre-requisites

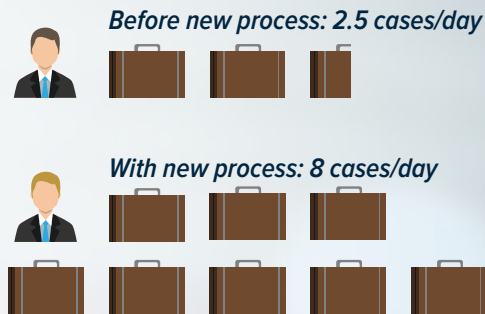TO THE POINT
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RESULTS:

1. More Candidates
Web page testing improves acquisition rates by 21%
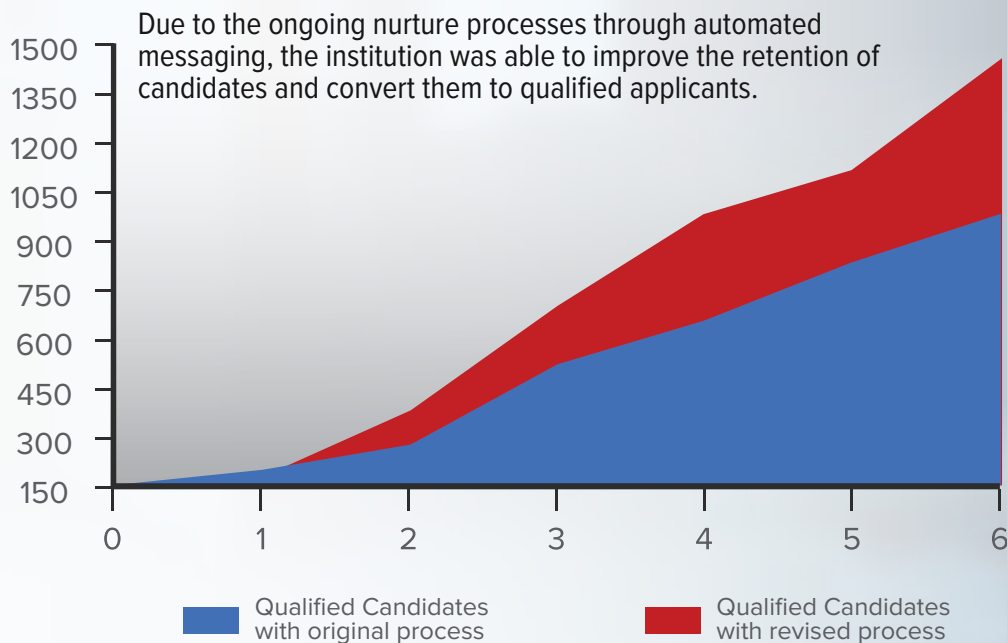
2. Less Staff Time
Administrative case work time reduced by 33%

Without the use of a standardized process and marketing automation best practices, administrative personnel spent about 3 hours on nurturing for each candidate. After implementation of the automated system, administration was required only to sort for lead quality and to follow up with undetermined candidates, reducing their case time to 1 hour per candidate.

Before new process: 2.5 cases/day

With new process: 8 cases/day

3. Increased Enrollments
Qualified candidate pool increased by 47%

Due to the ongoing nurture processes through automated messaging, the institution was able to improve the retention of candidates and convert them to qualified applicants.

Legend:
- Qualified Candidates with original process
- Qualified Candidates with revised process

CONCLUSION:

By applying marketing automation to replace outdated recruitment practices, the overall cost of lead acquisition and administrative burden was reduced significantly. Enrollments were also increased, particularly in hard to fill programs. The results clearly indicate that simply having the automation is not enough– it can't run itself. The success of the Institution's program overall relied heavily on their marketing agency development and refinement of the acquisition process, as well as the careful analysis and interpretation of results.

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