

Bedford University Integrated Direct Marketing Case Study

Vertical Market: Education

Business Objective: To increase enrollment to MBA program

Services Provided: Personalized direct mail, list acquisition and program analysis reports.

Challenge

Bedford University's School of Business MBA Executive Development Center had created a new Foundations of Leadership Program and needed to find a way to market this new program and get enrollments for the coming year. Each year the university sets enrollment goals for all programs and the administrator of this program was under pressure to meet the enrollment goal the university was counting on for this new program.

Solution

In an effort to help the School of Business meet its enrollment goals, we suggested they use an integrated direct marketing campaign to reach and recruit new students for its MBA Executive Development Center Foundations of Leadership Program. Bedford University's program was renowned for its concentration in international marketing and global management. Therefore, the campaign was targeted to alumni of the university as well as business professionals with responsibility for leading and operating successful multinational companies.

The campaign involved three different marketing tools using two different types of media: direct mail and outdoor advertising. First, Bedford University created a direct mail postcard with a personalized URL to entice recipients to visit the campus to learn more about the program. The personalized URL drove the recipients to a website landing page where they were asked a few questions to gauge their level of interest in the program. After they completed the survey, they received a thank you e-mail, as well as a follow-up phone call from the university to try to schedule a personal tour.

Because personalized URLs tend to help increase response rates in direct mail, Bedford University used a personalized URL on each postcard sent to their list of local business professionals, which they purchased just for this marketing effort. They used a generic URL on their list of alumni, since they felt that this group already had a high propensity to respond due to familiarity with the school. They also printed extra copies of this postcard so that as they received inquiries about the program, they could just label and address a card and mail it one-off.

The third approach used, was a different generic URL on the bus transit shelter signage in the downtown area near the school. Using a different URL allowed the university to measure and track the effectiveness of the cost of this type of outdoor advertising. It also helped them learn something about the type of people who respond to this ad, so that they could better target future marketing to each respondent's specific needs.

Results

Once the integrated direct marketing campaign was underway, Bedford was able to view a number of online reports. They could track campaign statistics in real-time, learning how many people responded to-date and what their responses were. If they wanted to, they could have attached a weight to each of the questions. Weighted questions elicit immediate action such as assigning leads for immediate follow-up or generating a brochure for fulfillment.

The School of Business generated a 30% response rate from the postcard mailer and 2% from the bus shelter URL. Ten percent of all responses answered the survey questions. The overall impact for the school was a 10% increase in enrollment for the coming year.

Moving Ahead with Integrated Direct Marketing

Because this campaign proved successful for the School of Business, the university decided to try integrated direct marketing to increase enrollment at its undergrad program. They decided to use online surveys to schedule appointments for onsite information sessions and also to collect information from potential students about their future plans and goals. The event registration form and new student survey will be promoted through direct mail, e-mail, radio and in print ads using a generic URL.