How to Optimize Your Graduate Recruitment Strategy with Intent-Based Marketing

Tuesday, May 25, 2021
Introductions

TODAY’S SPEAKERS

Reva Levin
VP, Digital Strategy
ACT | NRCCUA

Jason Stevens
Regional Director, Digital Strategy
ACT | NRCCUA
Agenda

• Who We Are & What We Do
• Trends in Graduate & Adult Enrollment
• Intent-Based Marketing
• Search Engine Marketing & Keyword Remarketing
• YouTube & Finding Adults in the Market for Education
• Best Bets for Driving Grad & Adult Enrollment
• Key Takeaways
• Q&A
Who We Are & What We Do

As a mission-driven organization, we support better outcomes for students and institutions alike.

Find your best-fit students in the ACT | NRCCUA Combined Data Set.

Optimize your enrollment strategy with purpose-built analytics identifying funnel insights, comparisons, and opportunities for improvement.

Drive institutional success with actionable research on traditional-, adult-, and program demand.

Engage with your best fit students on today’s emerging media platforms and track their activities on your EDU site.

Elevate your student engagement with integrated email, print, and phone campaigns.

Institutional Research

Traditional Engagement

Digital Solutions

Student Search

Enrollment Analytics
The Good News for Graduate & Adult Learning Enrollment Teams
During COVID, Adult Interest in Advanced Education Stayed Strong or Grew

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Interest</th>
<th>Committed</th>
<th>Hesitant</th>
<th>Skeptical</th>
<th>Not Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eduventures 2020 Adult Prospect Survey
45% of Adults Surveyed said COVID Impacted their Interest in College in a Positive Way

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of COVID-19 on Attitudes About Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you more or less interested in going to college or university?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much more interested</th>
<th>Somewhat more interested</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Somewhat less interested</th>
<th>Much less interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eduventures 2020 Adult Prospect Survey
# A Look at the Education Plans of Adult Surveyed

## Education Plans

If you were to enroll in a college or university, which credential would you pursue first?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credential</th>
<th>July 2019</th>
<th>June 2020</th>
<th>Oct 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-credit courses or certificates</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual college credit courses without completing a degree</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational or technical training</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate certificate for college credit</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate certificate for college credit</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's degree (2-year degree)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree (4-year degree)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree (including MBA)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD, EdD)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree (e.g., PhD)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eduventures 2020 Adult Prospect Survey
Intent-Based Marketing Explored
Intent Marketing Takes into Consideration Context, Motivation & Behavior
Who Are These Degree Seeking Adults?

Source: Eduventures 2020 Adult Prospect Survey
Where Are These Degree Seeking Adults?

What Motivates These Degree Seeking Adults?

**Personal Discovery 15%**

It's my time to study what I want. Now that I'm older, more secure and closer to retirement, my decision to return to school will be less a matter of economics and more about my curiosities and interests.

**Career Investment 40%**

An investment in my career growth is my next best move. I'm ready to move ahead in my current field, and maybe even with my existing employer. I want a graduate experience that will be closely aligned with my current on-the-job challenges and experiences.

**Career Renewal 18%**

Now's the time to reboot my career. Although school has not always been my favorite experience, I need to obtain new skills and a new network in order to switch careers, get a new job, or maybe even start my own business.

**Career through Academics 27%**

My next degree will define my future. I've been a successful student in the past and am certain that a rigorous academic degree program and access to accomplished faculty will accelerate my professional career.

Source: Eduventures 2020 Adult Prospect Survey
Do These Degree Seeking Adults Work?

Source: Eduventures 2020 Adult Prospect Survey
How Do Employment & Mindsets Intersect?

% OF ADULTS EMPLOYED FT BY MINDSET

- Personal Discovery
- Career thru Academics
- Career Renewal
- Career Investment

Source: Eduventures 2020 Adult Prospect Survey
Appealing to the Mindsets with Your Creative

Career Through Academics
- Rank
- Reputation
- Faculty
- Awards
- Network
- Alumni

Personal Discovery
- Passion
- Pursue
- Lead
- Fulfill
- Transform
- Empower

Career Renewal
- Affordable
- Accelerated
- Level Up
- Fast Track
- Be in Demand
- Invest in Yourself

Career Investment
- Flexible
- Advance
- Enhance
- Lead
- Take Charge
- Move Up

Source: Eduventures 2020 Adult Prospect Survey
Creative in Action

Career Through Academics

Personal Discovery

Career Renewal

Career Investment

Source: Examples Found on Moat.com 5/23/21
Search Engine Marketing
Make Search Your First Stop

87% of adult prospects used a search engine during their search, and 92% of all searches start with Google.

SEM is a high performing intent-based marketing. When deciding how to invest your media budget, invest in SEM first.

Source: Hubspot, State of Marketing Report 2020
Make the Most of Your Search Ad Real Estate

- Strong headlines
- Good use of call out extensions
- Connects with motivation
- Uses all site links available
- Using all of the real estate
- Google gives you pushes your competitors down the results page

**Online BBA Degrees - Complete Your BBA Online**
Hold an AS or 45 Credits? Complete Your BBA Online & Advance. Get Started Today! Finish your **bachelors degree** in business administration **online** while you work. 100% **Online**.

- **Career-Focused Curriculum**
  - Gain Actionable Skills For Business
  - View Detailed Program Curriculum.

- **Accredited & Nonprofit**
  - Accredited Online Programs Ranked Among the Best in the Nation.

- **Affordable Tuition**
  - Learn About Our Affordable Tuition and Financial Aid Opportunities.

- **Admission Requirements**
  - Learn About Admission Requirements For Our Online BBA Program.
Consider Making Your SEM Evergreen

Search Engine Marketing campaigns give you incredible access to data that you can use to further optimize your bids. SEM gets ‘smarter’ the longer you run.

Adults are continually entering the market for education. Make sure you SEM is there when they are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEM 2020 - 2021</th>
<th>CPC</th>
<th>CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
<td>2.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>$3.51</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>$8.71</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>$2.51</td>
<td>3.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>$6.91</td>
<td>3.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>$2.87</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>$1.47</td>
<td>4.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keyword Best Practices

**How do you find the best keywords for your SEM campaigns?**

- **New searches**: 15% of searches seen on Google.com are brand new, every single day.
- **More consideration**: Consumer journeys are becoming increasingly complex and search is no longer a lower-funnel channel.
- **Voice searches**: Smartphones combined with voice search create additional search moments in new contexts.
# SEM Drives Results Quickly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>NRCCUA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Run Dates</td>
<td>Oct - Dec 2020</td>
<td>Search Engine Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM Spend</td>
<td>$12,012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impressions Delivered</td>
<td>59,775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Complete</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Clicks</td>
<td>13,052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Average CTR</td>
<td>21.84%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verified Actions</td>
<td>10,983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Studies</td>
<td>9,583</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
<td>811</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Client EDU Site Traffic Trends Oct – Dec 2020
THE GOOD NEWS: Your SEM campaign had a 22% click thru rate. Congrats.

THE BAD NEWS: The other 78% of adults searching for the programs you offer did NOT click your SEM ads.

NOW WHAT? Search Keyword Remarketing makes sure that your ads follow people around the web when they searched for a term you’ve bid on, but they did not click. This gives you a second chance to get in front of those active shoppers and bring them back to your EDU site.
Case Study: Reaching ASN Intenders

**Campaign Goal**

Promote ASN program in a pricey SEM market that has historically not yielded conversion in the healthcare segment.

**Digital Solution**

Client had a need to add ASN inquiries to the top of their funnel and was struggling to find them in a hyper-local search. SEM, while targeted, was not delivering enough conversion, on its own.

Our keyword retargeting approach made use of the same high value keywords in their SEM campaign but delivered impactful ads at a much lower cost.

**$132 Cost Per Applicant**

- 839 total verified actions to important pages on their EDU site in 1 month
- 406 verified visits to their ASN page
- 32 verified visits to the client’s apply portal

Client has since added to their campaign
YouTube Intent-Based Options
We Like YouTube for Adult Learners

- YouTube is the 2nd most used search engine in the world
- 74% of Adults 18+ in the U.S. use YouTube
- You can target current college students looking for colleges in a precise geographic area
- YouTube and Google share values = very rich targeting options
YouTube Drives Grad Applications

**YouTube Target:** People with college degrees looking at college content.

**Result Highlights:**

87% view thru rate v. 15% YouTube average view thru rates

127,890 total views

71,350 potential grad students watched 100% of the client’s video

137 new potential grad students driven to the application in just 11 weeks.
Case Study: Reaching Working Engineers

YOUTUBE ENGAGES IDEAL PROSPECTS TO GROW FUNNEL

**Campaign Goal**

Engage working professional engineers with a highly branded video campaign that generates awareness and creates value to a selective cohort.

**Digital Solution**

Client was seeking to engage working professional engineers seeking professional growth with advanced degrees and certificates.

In a statewide campaign targeting large metro’s we leveraged the robust targeting data available on YouTube to display a custom video to intenders based on their recent Google search history as well as their demographic profile.

301,997 Engaged views to target cohort

- An over 57% view rate vs. the YouTube benchmark of 15%
- Average watch time of 23 seconds of a 30 second video
- 584 quality visits to important pages within their .Edu

Client has since added to their campaign
Our Best Bets for Driving Enrollment in FY22
Our Best Bets for Driving Enrollment in FY22

Next-Gen Custom Audience
Takes students you know and reaches them with high frequency over their most used platforms (Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram) and devices (smartphones, laptops and tablets).

YouTube Pre-Roll Advertising
Ability to target teens looking for colleges or transfer schools. Puts your video message in front of tens of thousands of cohorts efficiently.

Search Engine Marketing
Most efficient means of getting your message in front of people who are actively ‘shopping’ for education by searching on Google. A cost per click strategy.

Search Keyword Remarketing
Display ads that target people searching for your keywords and phrases who did not click on your search ads. A great way to double down on a market of active seekers of the programs you offer.

Programmatic Audio Advertising
Leverages Pandora, Spotify, iHeartRadio, etc. more. Ability to target by age, geography and genre of music.

Mobile Geo-Fencing
Our 100% mobile app network reaches 2 out of 3 smart devices in the US today. Changes to Apple IOS v.14.5 have had negligible effect so far.

Connected TV (OTT) Advertising
Leverages OTT platforms including Hulu, Sling, Vudu and Xbox. Ability to target by age, geography and an interest in education. Reaches students and parents at home.

EDU Site Retargeting
Research shows students will visit your EDU site without applying or inquiring. Remarketing to them drives enrollment and reduces stealth.
Key Takeaways
8 Key Takeaways

1. Intent marketing has less risk and a higher reward.
2. Search Engine Marketing is the best way to find adults ‘actively shopping’ for advanced education.
3. Use all your SEM real estate to your advantage.
4. Pair SEM with Keyword Search Display Remarketing to capitalize on the ‘active shopper’ market for your programs.
5. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Snapchat are the most used social media platforms among US Adults.
6. YouTube has many smart ways to find that person likely to begin their graduate degree or adult continuing education search.
7. Design ads that resonate with the mindset(s) that best describe your enrolled students.
8. Use tags that will see 100% of your digital results. Tags should be able to record both post click and post impression traffic to your EDU site.
Questions & Answers
Digital Marketing Solutions for the Evolving Enrollment Office

You’re working harder. Why shouldn’t your media budget work harder for you?

We’ve designed and managed innovative digital campaigns for hundreds of institutions. Clients appreciate our creative approach to digital enrollment marketing for undergrad, transfer, grad and adult students.

Learn more:

encoura.org/grad-digital-solutions
Thank you.

Reva Levin  
Vice President, Digital  
Phone: 774.773.5945  
Email: reva.levin@nrccua.org

Jason Stevens  
Regional Director, Digital  
Phone: 816.859.2716  
Email: jason.stevens@nrccua.org