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Case Study

White Paper

A Case Study in High-Impact Dialogue Marketing *Generating vastly superior lead generation for a prestigious university.*



fabcom
integrated strategic marketing

VASTLY SUPERIOR LEAD GENERATION

SITUATION

A prestigious private university teaching advancing technology positioned to be on par with Ivy League universities needed a high-quality lead generation campaign. This university wanted to boost the number of high school students requesting information about the university.

The university has had a long-standing partnership with FabCom. With its highly refined dialogue marketing strategies, FabCom, in less than a decade, helped the university alter its reputation from a well-respected local tech school into the prestigious university that it is, while boosting its student population. This was done by crafting a unique position for the university among its competitors, and by precisely identifying the university's potential student enrollment and retention. Today, it has amended its campus to accommodate more than 1,200 students from all 50 states and six continents.

Moreover, FabCom helped the university increase its

enrollment during a time when tuition increased 50% to reflect the dramatically improved quality of its new accreditation, enhanced coursework and the caliber of its faculty and staff.

The university has been extremely successful in attracting high school students for many years, with online and offline marketing and advertising campaigns. FabCom tailors each campaign to resonate with individual students with dynamically targeted, emotionally relevant messaging. FabCom matches the university's distinct attributes (e.g., its network security major) to these individual students, based on the attributes that are most appealing to them. Then, FabCom pinpoints the messaging based on where the potential student is in the behavior cycle.

This is called [Brand Mapping](#).

The university offers undergraduate and graduate degrees, notably in programs that attract worldwide attention from recruiters at top-tier governmental



Strategy and Tactics

agencies and corporations. These majors include advancing computer science, serious gaming, human-computer interaction, network security, robotics, technology forensics and many more.

The challenge for FabCom and the university was substantial—to build upon an already successful, well-established foundation.

The university wanted to increase the number of high school students who request information about the university's degree programs.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

GOALS

- Increase highly qualified inquiries for information about this university from high school students.
- The target response rate for the campaign geared to high school sophomores: 1.5% (compared to an industry average of 0.72%).
- Target cost: \$40 per student acquisition.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase inquiries from high school sophomores, plus high school seniors—a particularly challenging task since most seniors have already settled on a short list of universities they hope to attend.
- Underscore the university's synchronic learning approach to education, where students simultaneously work on short-term and long-term projects; on their own, and in collaboration with on-campus and online

students, professors and industry professionals.

- Underscore the university's accreditation as a higher learning institution, and its standing as a prestigious university that attracts the attention of recruiters from the federal government (such as the Department of Homeland Security) and Fortune 100 companies (such as Boeing).
- Craft highly targeted, emotionally relevant, ongoing conversations between high-prospect high school students and the university. Use dialogue marketing strategies, such as personalized websites (PURLs) and individualized marketing messaging as well as real-time call center integration and collateral fulfillment.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES

Most college marketers are happy to see a 1% response rate to marketing campaigns, or perhaps 2% if they're doing exceptionally well.

The most successful dialogue marketing campaigns must contain: the right message in the right place at precisely the right time on the right media/marketing platforms.

FabCom uses a highly sophisticated process for campaigns. This begins with deep-dive brand mapping research. This is a critical step in the development of emotionally resonating messages, which are stored in a dynamic database technology infrastructure. Dialogues with prospective students are dynamic in that each conversation is directed by the individual student, who

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selects a specific brand attribute (e.g., a specific major) that is of most interest to them. This then triggers the deployment of another targeted marketing asset, such as an HTML or a personalized direct mail, and usually a personalized website (PURL). These initiatives help us gather behavior information for bull's-eye targeting in the next engagement.

This particular campaign began with an individualized HTML that was emailed to students culled from a College Board's database list. These HTMLs contained pre-populated data fields (such as name, address and test scores). Based on each student's specific selections for information, students were sent personalized direct mail that provided additional information and the Web address for their PURL. This PURL led them through the live online automated inquiry funnel.

In the older campaign, the university's marketing for high school sophomores consisted of HTMLs and direct mail. The overall response rate was an impressive

2.3%. The digital media major had a 2.9% response rate; network security was at 3.6%; computer science had an outstanding 7.6% response rate.

The university's new [dialogue marketing](#) campaign, crafted by FabCom, consisted of:

- Refined dialogue marketing messaging for five campaigns: General, computer science, digital media, gaming and network security
- Separate creative messaging for male and female sophomores
- HTMLs, [Direct Marketing](#) and Personalized Websites (PURLs)
- Automatically triggered Recruitment Funnel Collateral and Automated Call Center Integration to the University's counselors
- A negligible increase in marketing investment



Strategy and Tactics

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Most high school seniors have already narrowed down the universities they would like to attend, and many have already been accepted by a college. As a result, it can be extremely difficult to generate interest from this group.

That said, the university's prior campaign, which consisted of emotionally charged messaging such as, "take the final step," generated a respectable 0.5% response rate.

FabCom, which has spearheaded dynamic one to one, [dialogue marketing](#) for many years, actually scaled back the campaign's reach by 29%. But, with the new brand mapping applied and the highly refined messaging tailored to individuals, the response rate soared.

Moreover, through extensive brand mapping research (where individuals are matched to the brand's attributes that appeal to them, in lieu of a general message or advertising claim), FabCom identified a secondary target audience influential in selecting universities: parents. The university's refined dialogue marketing campaign consisted of:

- Refined dialogue marketing messaging for four product categories: General, computer science, digital media and network security
- Separate creative messaging for male and female seniors

- HTMLs, Direct Marketing and PURLs targeted to high prospect high school seniors
- Simultaneous Direct Marketing and PURLs geared to the parents of high school seniors
- A significant reduction in marketing investment



Results

FabCom’s [dialogue marketing](#) campaigns generated astronomical increases in response rates from both high school sophomores and high school seniors.

HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES

Among sophomores, the total marketing investment increased a modest 13%. Yet, the response rate surged 39%, to 3.2% (3,741 prospects) with the new, refined dialogue marketing campaign. That was up from 2.3% (1,993 prospects) with the original campaign.

More impressive, among male high school sophomores, the response rate was nothing short of extraordinary: a 118% increase, to a 3.7% response rate with FabCom’s refined dialogue marketing campaign.

Among the specific degree programs, for all prospective students, the response rate for the digital media major increased 21%; gaming was up 4900%; computer science slipped 5%; network security was up 22%.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Although the dialogue marketing campaign geared to prospective high school seniors was scaled back by 29%, FabCom’s refined campaign generated a huge 40% increase, to a 0.7%. That was up from 0.5% with the original campaign.

The campaign consisted of dual targets—students and parents.

Among high school seniors, the granularly and behaviorally targeted, less costly dialogue marketing campaign surged 20%, for a total response of 0.7%.

This campaign is the result of combining socio-graphic and behavioral data with demographics, plus a strong agency-client partnership, to create effective, ongoing dialogue marketing conversations that result in superior ROI.



FABCOM IS A FULL-SERVICE STRATEGIC MARKETING, PR, AND ADVERTISING FIRM

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*Amortized for media billings as calculated in the Phoenix Business Journal Book of Lists.