Strategic Search: How Oregon Tech Launched a Search Program and Grew Applications

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Today’s Presenters

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Oregon Institute of Technology

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The College Board

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The College Board
Largest database of college bound students in the country. Nearly 6.7 million students in the classes of 2018-2022

College Board Search includes:
- Student Search Service
- Enrollment Planning Service (EPS)
- Segment Analysis Service

Fifteen data loads per year
To date in 2018, we’ve added over 1,700,000 new students to the database
1,900 institutions use College Board Search
Oregon Institute of Technology

Erik Johnson, Director of Admissions

- Arrived at Oregon Tech in April 2018
- Ten years of experience in Admissions
- No prior experience with data science or business intelligence

- Oregon’s Public Polytechnic University
- Founded in 1947 as a vocational school; now offering Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees
- 5,300 undergraduate students
- Nationally ranked programs
- 97% post-graduate success rate
- Small but mighty institution, a “hidden gem”

Oregon Tech Freshmen, 1995-2018

Series 1
A Changing Picture

Ambitious goals for enrollment growth.

- New president and senior administrative staff
- Ambitious goal to grow enrollment by 2,000 students in ten years (+37%)
- Lack of awareness about Oregon Tech in primary markets
- Given STEM demand, value, and strong outcomes, enrollment growth goal is expected to be attainable
- Budget Uncertainty
Foundation Building

Strategy development begins with data.

- CRM and operational challenges
- Adoption of College Board Search suite of services, including:
  - Segment Analysis Service
  - Enrollment Planning Service
  - Student Search Service
- Data analysis of various populations
- Understanding in-state and out-of-state markets
Launching a Search Strategy

Finding all the right students through strategic decisions in the Search database.

- Using high school cluster data to focus resources appropriately in-state
- Using educational neighborhood cluster data in developing markets
- Effort to find underserved students in OR
- Using program-focused criteria
- Mindful of filters that limit volume – we want to be talking with every qualified student who meets our criteria
- Searching Sophomores - Seniors
- Building dynamic campaigns
Bringing it All Together

How EPS has helped us travel smarter and concentrate our limited resources strategically.

- Used competitor analysis in EPS to understand developing markets with less internal data
- Travel planning within clusters using EPS
Initial Results

Bottom line: Search helped Oregon Tech improve student engagement and get more applications.

- 200% initial application increase YOY
- Strong response rate on sophomore and junior email and mail campaigns
- Nine successful “Discover Oregon Tech” regional receptions
- 15.9% increase in attendance for annual Fall Preview Day
Lessons Learned

As with any new process, learning from experience and optimizing for next time is critical.

- Data tracking is important
- Include AP next time
- Be careful of over-segmenting
- Prepare the Admission team (and the campus) for a change in workflow
Future Search at Oregon Tech

Future plans include getting more names more often, refining strategy, and measuring results in new ways.

- Increased budget after initial success
- Commit to strategy over multiple years to track ROI
- Set aside weekly time for periodic tagging in SAS to see how the class is building
- Moving to standing orders
- Building out more robust, multi-channel, dynamic campaigns
- Net fishing to spear fishing
- Comparing College Board results to other sources of data and refining
College Board Search Volumes

15 Data Loads per Year

• In Fall 2017 over 81,000 new-to-Search Senior names were added to the database during the Fall SAT administrations.
• Largest Data Load of the year, estimated 3 million students.

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Questions

We can customize a consultation to your needs and goals

- Search Consultations are always free and designed to help you get the most out of Search

For a Search Consultation please contact Mark or Carolyn:

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